

“To Hesitate is Cowardly”: Radicalism and American Manhood, 1870-1920

By

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Abstract

Examination of newspapers, novels, images, and organizational materials from the Gilded Age and Progressive Era reveals that radical groups framed their masculinity within contemporary expectations of manhood in order to legitimize their radical theories. An investigation of five prominent radical groups—the Knights of Labor, Haymarket anarchists, Populists, Wobblies, and socialists—shows how radicals contested industrial-era capitalism by making the claim that capitalists had degraded workers’ manhood. Thus, radicals called on workers to accept their radical programs as a means of regenerating their manhood. In response, the political and industrial elite successfully rebuffed radicalism, in part, by positioning the masculinity of radicals as existing outside of socially acceptable norms. This dissertation explores the discursive contest between radicals and their opponents and uncovers the interconnectedness between masculinity, politics, and economic theories during a crucial period in America’s development as a nation.

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Introduction

During the Gilded Age and Progressive Era—a period of rapid industrialization in America—modern economic structures took form with the solidification of capitalism and the two-party system of democracy. Yet, the cementing of capitalism and the two-party system was not an inevitable outcome, as radical ideologies emerged to challenge the status quo. The purpose of my dissertation is to explore how radicals and their opposition used the language of masculinity in their cultural productions during this fifty-year period, and it seeks to answer how and why expectations and definitions of manhood were used to legitimize and delegitimize political and economic radicalism. Furthermore, this exploration Gilded Age and Progressive Era masculinity will allow us to understand the dominant themes and changes in idealized masculine behaviors and expectations in America, as well as show the interconnection between masculinity, politics, and economics during a crucial period of radical thought in America. Thus, the central question at the heart of this dissertation is: how did radicals and their opposition, including the established political parties and the industrial elites use the language of manhood for their own purposes?

In looking at how masculinity was constructed in this time period, I will show that men coped with, challenged, and shaped their political and economic understanding of society through gender-based discourse. Ultimately, my argument is that radicals' beliefs, expectations, and cultural discourse of what it meant to be a man, with few exceptions, did not radically overturn predominant meanings of manhood in American society. On the contrary, as radicals vigorously protested capitalism and the two-party political system in America, they often tried to accomplish their radical goals by relying on contemporary and accepted expectations of masculinity in America. Radicals used this gender discourse to legitimize their reformist economic and political beliefs by constructing male identities that were in line with society's

general expectations of manhood. Furthermore, radicals used these accepted notions of manhood to argue that the ruling moneyed classes and corrupt politicians in society had betrayed authentic American manhood. In conceptualizing this argument, I do not argue that an “ideal” masculinity is attainable, for gender ideals are dynamic and fluid. Instead, I aim to show that radicals attempted to portray themselves as “ideal men” in order to make their economic and political radicalism sufficiently palatable to a suspicious American public. At the same time, political and economic elites were not passive observers. Hoping to delegitimize the radicals’ potentially dangerous ideologies, they also used gender discourse that portrayed their radical opponents in un-masculine ways.

The dissertation covers the time period from 1870 to 1920 for several reasons. Foremost, I want to explore an extended period of time in various localities in American history so that a comparative assessment can be made. In this investigation of five major radical groups—the Knights of Labor, the Haymarket anarchists, the Populists, the Industrial Workers of the World, and socialists—ample evidence emerged that shows a pattern in which each radical group consistently used either contemporary or traditional expectations of manhood in its cultural productions. It should be noted that these groups’ conceptions of manhood were not universally similar since American men’s dominant expectations of manhood shifted at the turn of the nineteenth century. An examination of this fifty-year period that covers two important eras in American history—the Gilded Age and Progressive Era—allows for an assessment of what happened when the dominant expectations of manhood shifted at the turn of the century from the archetype of the Self-Made, Victorian Gentleman to the ideal of passionate, red-blooded manhood.¹ Thus, the process and evolution of cultural discourse in regards to masculinity shows

¹ E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Age* (New York: Basic Books, 1993). Rotundo argues that three phases of masculinity existed in which one archetype of masculinity dominated American culture in that historical time and place. These three phases are defined as:

how Americans of all classes coped with the rise of modern America, and also reveals the flexible nature of American manhood in how men, especially radicals, adapted to the changing currents of masculinity.

This work is informed by theories of culture and gender. Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemonic structures assists in explaining the role that conflict and consensus played in establishing masculine expectations in American society. This dissertation is largely an investigation of cultural discourse disseminated in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era when historical actors struggled and came into conflict with one another in their attempts to define reality. Historian Mary Ann Clawson's discussion of Gramsci's theory perfectly summarizes this cultural struggle, as she states, "The dominant class does structure consciousness, in the sense that it exercises a disproportionate influence over the definition of social reality. Yet significantly, this 'reality' is a contested one, constantly challenged by the experiences, needs, demands, and imputations of subordinate groups."² Thus, in the context of my dissertation, in the struggle to define reality in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, radical groups situated their political and economic reforms within conservative and contemporary expectations of masculinity. To legitimize their radicalism and explain why reform was necessary, radicals asserted that modern capitalism degraded manhood. Radicals challenged the hegemonic class by appropriating expectations that defined masculine behavior. Furthermore, radicals also used the discourse of manhood to assert their power over their mightier capitalist opponents by contending that the capitalists had lost their sense of manhood and were failing to live up to these same manly expectations. Similarly, industrialists mobilized their own power to define their

communal manhood, self-made manhood, and passionate manhood (which I use interchangeably with red-blooded manhood).

² Mary Ann Clawson, *Constructing Brotherhood: Class, Gender, and Fraternalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 12-13.

radical opponents in a manner that positioned radicals within a cultural framework in which they lacked authentic American manhood. The struggle between radicals and capitalists to define one's manhood in contrast to the "other" as a means of legitimizing their political and economic standing forms a central conflict in the narrative of my dissertation.

As for gender theory, specifically masculinity studies, my dissertation employs models set forth in Anthony Rotundo's *American Manhood* and Michael S. Kimmel's *Manhood in America*. These two works trace dominant phases and themes that place the whole spectrum of the masculine experience in America into defined categories. Rotundo's scope extends from the colonial experience to the beginning of the twentieth century, and defines the three categories of manly expectations as communal manhood, self-made manhood, and passionate manhood. Within each phase of the masculine experience, men were expected to conform to certain gender roles to affirm their manhood. Kimmel's approach differs in that he searches for dominant themes that define American manhood and transcend specific historical phases. He specifically contends that the three themes of American manhood are self-control, exclusion, and escape, and that American men take their masculine cues from cultural models. While men might simultaneously idolize or construct their model of manhood off of athletes, cowboys, politicians, or wealthy businessmen, these models all relate to those three themes. Stereotypically depicted as being more aggressive, stronger, and fit for competition than women, men have lived with societal expectations to control those more primitive traits, to exclude men who are believed to be unable to control them, or to escape, either to a more primitive physical realm— like the West—or through cultural media, such as sports, books, and films, that allow men a fantasy experience of masculine escapism.

In contrast to Kimmel and Rotundo, the dominant theme from the feminist perspective is that the American male experience is "defined by the drive for power, for domination, [and] for

control.”³ Works from this point of view, such as Sally Robinson’s *Marked Men*, put forth the argument that white men, usually of the middle and upper classes, work consistently to “re-win” their white male identity as being normative. Within this line of argumentation, crises in masculinity develop when the hegemony of white, middle-class men becomes vulnerable to the advances of women, minorities, and lower-class men.⁴ Thus, this rationale contends that American manhood is not based merely off self-control, but total control, of themselves and of their society. These three works of gender history help to inform my understanding of the meanings of manhood in that there can be transitional phases in the dominant expectations of manhood, but also stable roles for men to play even as these transitional phases occur, most notably at the turn of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, the contest to define normative manly behavior and gender roles became an important feature in the identity politics of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, when radicals and mainstream politicians sought to assert their power by claiming authentic American manhood.

The need for control and self-control in America’s political and economic structures was heightened in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, when industrialization and modernity offered both destruction and regeneration. Marshall Berman’s seminal study, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air* establishes an insightful method to examine the closing decades of the 19th century. Berman writes of modernity, “It is a paradoxical unity, a unity of disunity: it pours us all into a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction, of ambiguity and anguish. To be modern is to be part of a universe in which, as Marx said, ‘all that is solid melts into air.’”⁵ This paradox is quite identifiable in the period of American industrialization, when the conflict between labor and capital intensified. This conflict threatened not only the stability of the state,

³ Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 5-7.

⁴ Sally Robinson, *Marked Men: White Masculinity in Crisis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 3-6.

⁵ Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Penguin Books, 1982), 5.

but also the security of the traditional family and gender roles. With modern life threatening to uproot traditional structures along with contemporary expectations of manhood, American men of all classes desired to “get a grip on the modern world and make themselves at home in it.”⁶ For American men in positions of political and economic power, this meant reasserting their control over the forces, most notably labor radicals, immigrants, and women that threatened their position of hegemony. In addition to this, elites feared disorder and the destruction of the state brought on by their own masculine degeneracy that was caused by living in a modern world of luxury and consumption. Consequently, elites sought to regenerate their manhood, often by valorizing the “strenuous life,” as Theodore Roosevelt famously stated.

Likewise, American workingmen felt the strains of modernity as the growing might of corporations and trusts challenged their traditional gender role of patriarch and breadwinner. Self-made manhood had been the dominant expectation of American manhood for most of the nineteenth century, and this type of manhood was defined as the man who achieved economic independence through a strict adherence to the Protestant ethic. With the arrival of the Gilded Age, the archetype of the Self-Made Man began to erode under the staggering weight of big business and the emergence of trusts, which excluded a large part of the population from achieving economic independence. The emergence of corporations and bureaucracies further weakened American men’s acquisition of self-made manhood as middle-class clerical positions were sought at the expense of starting one’s own business. Seeking to assert control over their financial fortunes, and regenerate their position as manly breadwinners, groups of American men became sufficiently radicalized to join labor unions, political parties, and fraternal organizations that sought a more fair and equitable society. In arguing for new radical ideas that directly confronted the capitalist framework of society, radical politicians and workingmen blended these

⁶ Berman, 15.

new ideas with an accepted contemporary understanding, and at times, a traditional notion, of what manhood entailed. This blend of old and new was a strategy they employed to legitimize the application of new radical political and economic policies by tying them to a framework of contemporary understandings of what makes a man a *man*. Yet, the attempt to legitimize radicalism through contemporary notions of manhood was not merely a permanent, backwards-looking strategy of appropriating older, nostalgic visions of manhood, but one that was highly adaptable and could reinvent itself as masculine expectations shifted. Thus, as quickly as hegemonic notions of masculinity “melted into air,” radical groups acknowledged them, and repositioned themselves as the standard bearers of a newer and more contemporary understanding of manhood.

Gail Bederman’s *Manliness and Civilization* provides further theoretical approaches to investigating the role of gender in society. Bederman contends that manhood is not solely based on societal expectations, traits, and sex roles, but rather is “a historical, ideological process,” one that consists of “complex political technology” and is “composed of a variety of institutions, ideas, and daily practices”—essentially, one that is socially constructed. Within this process of defining and constructing manhood, Bederman argues, “Individuals are positioned and position themselves as men.”⁷

This holds true in the study of political radicalism as men competed for political power, often through the self-construction of their own masculine identity, while positioning the manhood of their political opposition as failing to meet the masculine standards expected in society. The meanings of manhood are fraught with ambiguities and fluctuations, and paradoxically, with a certain degree of static sameness. In the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, masculine expectations were manipulated, reshaped, and renewed in a consistent discursive

⁷ Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 7.

contest between supporters of capitalism and democracy and their radical opposition. While Bederman asserts that expectations of manhood are part of a fluid, ideological discourse specific to its own time and place, it is also true that when conceptions of accepted masculinity changed in society, the change did not necessarily negate earlier understandings of what it meant to be a man. Men who established a manly role as a breadwinner, such as a stable patriarch, or even physical roles such as an athlete or soldier, would rarely have had their manhood questioned. It was this relative stability in the construction of manhood that radicals could draw on, to connect their new radical ideas with an older, stable understanding of what it meant to be a man.

Yet, when expectations of manhood shifted towards the passionate, red-blooded ideal in the early twentieth century, radical groups realized that they must draw on more modern and contemporary notions of virile manhood, because these were valued more in this historical time and place. Similar to how Berman explains the regenerative and destructive forces of modernity, masculinity is both stable and fluid. Social expectations of masculinity are rigorously contested and apt to change, yet, men can often still aspire to uphold older, and more traditional, masculine roles. Ultimately, the contest to legitimize radicalism through one's appropriation of masculine expectations created a social atmosphere fraught with contradictions that could be implemented by men of all backgrounds to manipulate the perceived manhood of others, while asserting their own masculinity in an ongoing conflict to win the hearts and minds of the public.

Radicals were more than willing participants in this contest to define manhood, and one of their major shortcomings was that they never truly developed a cogent and universal understanding of manhood. Rather than constructing an alternative meaning of manhood, radicals tended to express their manliness as consistent with either traditional or contemporary expectations of manhood. In each group under study in this dissertation, the radicals failed to inspire organizational cohesiveness based upon a carefully constructed masculine ideal. Instead,

each radical group experienced disunity within the movement over the meanings of manhood, which often left them fragmented, weak, and susceptible to their opponents' claims that they lacked proper manhood.

The difficulty in this study lies in the fact that any exploration of the discourse of masculinity is thus inherently fraught with contradictions. These contradictions appear in how radical males could be typecast as primitive brutes and, simultaneously, as cowardly, effeminate, or debased men who were unable to compete in the modern capitalist marketplace.

Paradoxically, middle and upper class Americans strove to regain some of those primitive masculine qualities at the same time that they disparaged radicals as brutes. These contradictions also become apparent in how tenets central to socialism and communism, such as communal living, were portrayed as ideologies of weak men who either did not want to or physically could not compete as men in a capitalist market where individualism reigned. Meanwhile, notions of teamwork and loyalty to corporations and communities increased in this same era in which communalism and the destruction of the individual were rejected as being unmanly. My dissertation will wade through these contradictions, exploring the various methods used to denigrate one's opposition while constructing one's own manhood.

My methodology is primarily to probe prominent and popular source material of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. My source material generally meets one of three criteria, and were deliberately chosen based on the premise that the cultural production was viewed either by a large part of the population, or—generally, in the case of radical-produced sources—by a specific audience that the author desired to influence. Thus, rather than being archival letters, diaries, or personal thoughts that would seldom be viewed by the public, my sources were specifically chosen because they were widely distributed or well-known, which shows that they influenced, or were influenced by, society. My first criterion focused on cultural productions

that had a high volume in sales or a significant subscription base, such as popular novels, like *Caesar's Column* or the *Chicago Tribune*. Secondly, I selected documents that were created by prominent or well-known Americans, such as politicians, industrialists, or leaders of a radical group. Finally, I chose to examine documents that were predominately distributed by a radical organization, especially newspapers, such as *The Knights of Labor* journal, *The Alarm*, and the *New York Call*. I will view these cultural productions through the lens of masculinity in order to discover how historical actors positioned themselves and their opponents as men. Although most of my sources have certainly been studied before, rarely have they been viewed in relation to how they expressed masculinity. While groups such as the IWW, socialists, and Haymarket anarchists have had manuscripts, articles, and book chapters devoted to unearthing their use of masculine discourse within their ranks, no historian has yet compiled a synthetic analysis of the development of masculinity among prominent radical movements in America to draw comparisons between them, to chart changes in masculine cultural discourse over time, and to explore how these radical movements affected dominant masculine ideals in American society.

I would like to explain the terminology I employ. The term “radicals” will refer to members of groups who had ideological beliefs that either opposed capitalism or wanted to reform it, or to political parties, such as the Populist and Socialist parties, which existed outside the dominant two-party system. I do not wish to imply that the Populists’ agrarian radicalism was equivalent to the radicalism of the Haymarket anarchists by grouping them under the umbrella term of “radical.” Instead, the term radical will be used to define those men and women who contested the hegemony of the political and industrial elite, which is defined as those men who supported one of the two major political parties and the capitalist system. The employment of the term “elite” is not meant to imply that working-class men who were Democrats or Republicans and supported capitalism were a part of a politically powerful and

financially wealthy middle or upper class elite, but rather as a way to categorize the opposition to political and economic radicals under a rhetorical designation since they all supported the dominant structures in American society.

The structure of my dissertation can effectively be broken into two parts. The first three chapters reveal how radicals of the Gilded Age claimed respectable, self-made manhood, whereas the final two chapters focus on how radicals adapted when the dominant ideals of masculinity shifted from Victorian self-made manhood to passionate manhood. During the Gilded Age, American men desired to escape from a Victorian ethos that shunned excessive alcohol use and other vices, but also sought self-control through the promotion of a Protestant ethic that would lead to a man's realization of economic success in the competitive market. Many American men sought to both realize and escape these repressive Victorian-era values by striking out to the frontier. The frontier not only represented an opportunity for economic success that was difficult to achieve in congested cities, but it was also a place where Victorianism held less governance over the behavior of men. Furthermore, some historians, such as Francis Parkman and Frederick Jackson Turner, argued that the frontier was a region in which American masculinity was originally forged. In addition, Victorian men excluded men of color, such as blacks, immigrants, and natives, from being accepted as manly. In this practice of exclusion, white American males paradoxically claimed that these groups were simultaneously effeminate and hypermasculine, primitive beasts, especially in regards to their sexual potency. Political radicals, often immigrants, participated in this exclusionary and contradictory discourse. They reciprocated by reproaching capitalist bosses as overcivilized gluttons who had "lost" their masculinity by indulging in a life of luxury, and as primitive beasts or ghouls that destroyed the bodies of honorable, working-class men. In trying to appropriate middle-class manhood for themselves, political radicals sought to remake society to benefit the working-class and they

often used the rhetoric of masculinity to attain an identity, or aura, of legitimacy that would validate their political principles. Thus, each chapter in my dissertation will focus on the discursive contests in which radicals used contemporary notions of masculinity to legitimize their radical, or reformist policies. Furthermore, the sources under investigation in each chapter will include newspapers, pamphlets, images, and works of fiction from the perspective of both radicals and their opposition. In exploring these source materials, I will explain how each side used cultural productions as a means of constructing their masculine identities.

Chapter 1 focuses on fraternal organizations and unions in the 1870s and 80s, most notably the Knights of Labor, who tried to reform capitalism by constructing an ideal manhood of respectability that was in line with expectations of Gilded Age Victorianism. They sought to curb drinking and violence, and thereby dispel cultural beliefs that working-class men were primitives and brutes. However, they faced opposition from political and social elites who manipulated public perception of working-class men and radicals as underground primitives.

Chapter 2 shifts the focus to the Haymarket anarchists, a group significantly more radical than the Knights of Labor. In this highly public affair, most of the nine anarchists convicted in Chicago used the subsequent trial as a “show trial” to espouse their radical beliefs. In disseminating their radicalism, they tried to soften their image from that of savage, anarchist degenerates to that of normal, traditional patriarchs who believed in radical ideas because they sought to save their families from the unjust practices of industrial capitalism. Conversely, the political and economic elite successfully swayed public opinion against the anarchists by portraying them contradictorily as both savage beasts and skulking cowards.

Chapter 3 concentrates on the rise of the Populist Party, which, like the radical groups before it, held onto contemporary understandings of manhood near the turn of the century. The Populists’ construction of manhood was centered on nostalgic beliefs in the “heroic artisan,” or

the independent and manly producer who claimed to be a victim of industrial capitalism and corrupt two-party politics. In attempting to establish this masculine ideal, Populists tried to appropriate the Republican Party's traditional male image as the protector of the home and family, but faced a mobilized political and economic elite that cast the Populists as backwards-looking, unmanly "hayseeds" and failures.

Chapter 4 is the first chapter dealing with radical groups, and it serves as the swing chapter in which the dominant ideals of manhood in America were shifting from the Victorian Self-Made Man to the passionate Red-Blooded Man in the Progressive Era. This chapter focuses on the members of the Industrial Workers of the World who adapted to the changing currents of manliness by establishing a construction of their organization as composed of strong, independent, and rugged men taken from the tradition of the American frontier. The Wobblies framed their cultural discourse by presenting themselves as the most masculine representatives of society concurrent with contemporary expectations of the red-blooded man. Yet, they too faced opposition, especially during and after World War I, when opposition to trade unionism depicted Wobblies as brutish, foreign traitors, leading to a heightened theater of violent conflict and vigilantism in an atmosphere in which proving your manhood often meant acting out in violent ways.

Chapter 5 turns to the Socialist Party, which like the IWW had to deal with the contemporary model of passionate masculinity. Similar to the IWW, some socialists, such as Jack London and Eugene Debs, sought to reinvent the traditional image of the liberal reformer. Since "practical" politicians, such as Roosevelt, traditionally viewed the Socialist Party and liberal reformers as effeminate or womanly, London and Debs countered this representation by using their writing and political speeches to show that reformist zeal and communal beliefs were indeed masculine endeavors. The socialists were also greatly affected by World War I and the

preparedness movement that preceded it, as their opposition to war allowed their capitalist opposition to label them as unmanly cowards unfit for military service.

This work does not intend to argue that the discursive and graphic construction of radicals' manhood caused radical politics to fail to take hold in America, for certainly there were several reasons why radical politics failed to sustain itself. Nor do I intend to argue that radicalism's prominence in American culture of this period marks the sole, or even primary, cause of elites' anxiety about their manhood during the Gilded Age, though certainly radicalism was one important factor. Furthermore, it is nearly an impossible exercise to discern whether a masculinity crisis actually existed in the minds of the political and economic elite. Whether these men merely fabricated a masculinity crisis in order to re-center themselves as dominant patriarchs in a society undergoing a massive transformation in relations between races, classes, and gender, or truly felt a crisis in their manhood is not a central part of this dissertation. Expectations for how men should behave and perform in society underwent a dramatic shift at the turn of the century, and much of this metamorphosis was due to the impact of modernization and industrialization. Despite these limitations in analyzing concrete causal relationships between American manhood and the failures of radicalism, this dissertation will reveal how radicals and their opposition utilized the discourse of masculinity in order to legitimize their policies and delegitimize their opponents' contentions.

The subjects I intend to focus on are white Americans and, on occasion, European immigrants. As a result, the contributions of African-Americans and women to the discourse of manhood are not a particular focus in my work, because thorough research has been conducted on these groups.⁸ I choose to highlight the experience of white American men because, as

⁸ Excellent research has been completed on African-American masculinity, especially in regards to southern populism. For more information, consult the works of Stephen Kantrowitz, including: Stephen Kantrowitz, "Ben Tillman and Hendrix McLane, Agrarian Rebels: White Manhood, 'The Farmers,' and the Limits of Southern Populism," *The Journal of Southern History* LXVI (August 2000), 497-524; Stephen Kantrowitz, "One Man's Mob

sociologist Ervin Goffman archly states, “There is only one complete unblushing male in America: a young, married, white, urban, northern, heterosexual, Protestant, father, of college education, fully employed, of good complexion, weight, and height, and a recent record in sports . . . Any man who fails to qualify in any one of these ways is likely to view himself—during moments at least—as unworthy, incomplete, and inferior.”⁹ Therefore, as Michael Kimmel states, in his historical record of the white male experience, “A history of manhood must . . . [recount] two histories: the history of the changing ‘ideal’ version of masculinity and the parallel and competing versions that coexist with it.”¹⁰ Most historical accounts of this time period focus either on men of different races or ethnic backgrounds, or on the political and cultural elite, such as presidents, businessmen, and academics. By exploring white male radicals in America, I intend not only to highlight men who have been marginalized at times in historical accounts of turn-of-the-century masculinity, but also to show that even among white men of different political and socio-economic backgrounds there was contention in defining true manhood in America.¹¹

is Another Man's Militia: Violence, Manhood, and Authority in Reconstruction South Carolina,” *Jumpin' Jim Crow: Southern Politics from Civil War to Civil Rights*, ed. Jane Dailey, Glenda Gilmore, and Bryant Simon (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2000), 67-87. For women and Populism in Kansas, consult Michael Lewis Goldberg, *An Army of Women: Gender and Politics in Gilded Age Kansas* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1997). Several works are available regarding women Socialists in the Progressive Era, including Mari Jo Buhle, *Women and American Socialism, 1870-1920* (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1983).

⁹ Kimmel, 4.

¹⁰ Kimmel, 4.

¹¹ Bederman's main focus is on the contestation of manliness between races, with a little (though slight) attention on class (with very scant information on political radicals). Other works, such as John F. Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man: The White Male Body and the Challenge of Modernity in America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), and Kristin Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998) also choose to focus on the “top-downward” approach, by paying attention to white cultural elites, such as Theodore Roosevelt. Mark C. Carnes and Clyde Griffen, eds., *Meanings for Manhood: Constructions of Masculinity in Victorian America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990) provides a collection of essays as a “bottom-up” approach, though most of the essays are focused on middle-class whites. Some works of manhood in this era have devoted attention to white working-class men and radicals, such as Jon Kingsdale, “The ‘Poor Man’s Club’: Social Functions of the Urban Working-Class Saloon,” *The American Man*, ed. Elizabeth H. Pleck and Joseph H. Pleck (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1980), 255-284; Rebecca Nell Hill, *Men, Mobs, and Law: Anti-Lynching and Labor Defense in U.S. Radical History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); Carl S. Smith, *Urban Disorder and the Shape of Belief: The Great Chicago Fire, the Haymarket Bomb, and the Model Town of Pullman* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995); Peter Harwood Morse Jr., *Wobbly Identities: Race, Gender, and Radical Industrial Unionists in the United* (Ph.D. Dissertation: State University of New York at

Through the selected groups and organizations I have chosen for my chapters, I intend to illuminate a period when political and cultural elites marked radical politics with the stigma of being unmanly. I will further show how radical groups used the meanings of manhood to try and legitimize their politics, and how their opponents used those same tactics to delegitimize their radical beliefs. It is important to explore how these connections originally came about in the minds and opinions of Americans, especially before this style of discourse hit a high watermark during the Cold War, when conservative Americans, especially Joseph McCarthy, asserted that liberals and radicals were effeminate and “soft.”¹² Furthermore, as recently as 2004, a book by Michael Barone titled *Hard America, Soft America: Competition vs. Coddling and the Battle for the Nation’s Future*, contended that unions and regulatory, socialistic government programs constitute America’s “soft” or unmanly side.¹³ Thus, a key objective of my dissertation is to uncover the historical context in which radical politics became affiliated with unmanliness. It is important to view how radical politicians fought to achieve acceptance in America and contest these historical trends by using discourse in line with contemporary expectations of masculinity, and by appealing to the masses that to “hesitate” in bringing change “is cowardly.”¹⁴

Binghamton, 2006). However, my objective is to draw parallels between five significant radical groups, which have rarely been commonly tied together in histories of radicalism and manhood.

¹² For more information on masculinity and political discourse in the Cold War, consult: K.A. Courdileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

¹³ Michael Barone, *Hard America, Soft America: Competition vs. Coddling and the Battle for the Nation’s Future* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2004).

¹⁴ The line “to hesitate is cowardly” is featured in the popular Populist, Free Silver movement tract, William Hope Harvey, *Coin’s Financial School* (Chicago: Coin’s Publishing Company, 1894), 143.

Chapter 1: Strikers, Detectives, and the Knights of Labor: The Construction of Respectable Masculinity in Working-Class Organizations

The 1870s through the 1890s, a period that Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner termed the “Gilded Age,” is defined by its volatility and disorder. Famous strikes mark the period, including the Great Strike against the railroads in 1877, the Homestead steel mill in 1892, and the Pullman sleeping car company in 1894, and reveal the intense drama and violence that characterize the relationship between labor and capital in this era. As the gap between tramps and millionaires increased, unions formed in an attempt to curb the excesses of big business. Unions sought to implement reforms designed to grant workers more economic equality and safer working conditions, but encountered opposition from industrialists who were eager to maintain their exploitative business practices, which brought them great wealth at the expense of poorly paid laborers. Industrialists sought to delegitimize unions as protecting weak, inferior, and lazy men, and they justified the unequal distribution of wealth with the ideas of Self-Made Manhood and Social Darwinism, which they contended had allowed the “fittest to survive.” Industrialists presumed that those who failed to secure economic independence, failed on their own accord; those who succumbed to vice and lacked the responsible and respectable manhood of their competitors deserved their fate. As workers and unions advocated for an expansion of their rights and privileges, they and the forces of capital constructed, contested, and manipulated gender identities and expectations—especially with regard to the meaning of manhood.

In an attempt to legitimize their radical reforms in the minds of workers, employers, and the public-at-large, unions and workers’ fraternal organizations forced members to abide by their construction of an idealized masculine identity, which portrayed average workers as respectable family men struggling against the degrading effects of industrial capitalism. In this process to legitimize their radical reforms by using the meanings of manhood, they faced opposition from

industrial capitalists and its hirelings, most famously the Pinkerton Detective Agency, who sought to define the manhood of strikers, radicals, and unionists as being outside of accepted notions of Victorian respectability. By depicting these reformers in unmanly terms, usually as idle drunks or primitive savages, industrialists used gender discourse as a means of reinforcing the status quo. This initial period of 1870 to the mid-1890s served as a formative time in which radicals and unions discovered that legitimizing their reforms through a contemporary understanding of manhood had potential for success. Yet, it was also a practice that was met with stern opposition, which stunted the growth of radicalism and unionization in America.

This chapter aims to locate and define the grounds of contestation over the meaning of manhood between strikers, detectives, and fraternal organizations, including unions, which came into existence in the 1870s and 1880s. Specifically, this chapter will focus on two fraternal organizations that came into existence in the 1870s and 1880s: the Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Knights of Labor. Workers in fraternal organizations, especially the Knights of Labor, often resorted to the strike to gain more privileges and rights needed to improve their social and financial status in industrial America. When the masculine ideal of the Self-Made Man became more difficult to achieve, due to the growth of corporations, workers struggled to hold on to traditional notions of individualism and personal success in business, paradoxically through joining fraternal organizations. With fraternal organizations often operating simultaneously as unions, and growing in strength and size, wealthy businessmen sought to infiltrate and topple these fraternal orders. Concurrently, industrialists, detectives, and their media allies attempted to manipulate the public's understanding of these reformist organizations. Corporate businessmen, aided by private detective agencies, conceptualized strikers and unionists as possessing aberrant manhood. In full sympathy with this strategy, the mainstream press stigmatized these men, not as the upholders of traditional masculine behavior that the fraternal organizations contended, but

rather as moral failures and primitive savages intent on creating disorder in a modern and unstable society. In return, fraternal orders and unions sought to earn societal credibility and approval of their orders. To accomplish this, the Knights sought to uphold Victorian standards of respectable manhood among its membership in order to persuade public opinion that striking workers were not idle, drunken deviants, but industrious, sober, and noble men. The chapter will begin with an exploration of the historical context of the dominant gender expectations in the Gilded Age. The latter section of the chapter will focus on unions and their capitalist opponents' struggle to construct and define their masculine identities.

After the Civil War, new developments in technology, especially in the areas of transportation and communication, along with an industrial culture that deemphasized artisan labor in favor of mechanization and standardization, led to the growth of large-scale corporations. These forces of technology and industrialization resulted in a process that Alan Trachtenberg has termed "the incorporation of America . . . [an] emergence of a changed, more tightly structured society with new hierarchies of control, and also changed conceptions of that society, of America itself."¹⁵ Amidst this industrial and mechanical revolution was the materialization of the societal paradox that Henry George, a writer and political economist, titled eponymously in an 1879 treatise, *Progress and Poverty*. As new technological achievements and machines lessened the burden for workers, these developments offered the hope that with "material progress," society would eliminate poverty and destitution. Instead, businesses grew larger and accumulated more wealth, labor was devalued, and where "material progress is most advanced," George argued, "we find the deepest poverty, the hardest struggle for existence, the greatest enforced idleness."¹⁶ The traditional American belief that close adherence to a

¹⁵ Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 3-4.

¹⁶ Henry George, *Progress and Poverty* (1879; repr., New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1907), 6.

Protestant work ethic would define success or failure in the marketplace was substantially undermined.

American poverty was most harshly felt during the years of the “Long Depression” from 1873 to 1878, when wages fell, and unemployment and underemployment increased. The icon of this depression was the tramp, who was not represented in empathetic terms, but instead, as the Dean of Yale Law School depicted him, as a “lazy, incorrigible, cowardly, utterly depraved savage.”¹⁷ Despite the toll that the era took on average workingmen, the notable successes of Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller, Jay Gould, and a host of other captains of industry, led many Americans still to think of the world of business, in Trachtenberg’s words, “as a field of personal competition, of heroic endeavor, and not of corporate manipulation. The ‘faceless’ corporation and the ‘organization man’ had not yet arrived as public perceptions.”¹⁸

Contemporary public opinion still held that individual effort was the key to material success; hence, the iconography of the self-made man ruled amidst the growing inequality of the distribution of wealth. John D. Rockefeller reflected these sentiments when he wrote, “Failures which a man makes in his life are almost always due to some defect in his personality, some weakness of body, or mind, or character, will, or temperament.” In Rockefeller’s view, “The only way to overcome these failings is to build up his personality from within, so that he, by virtue of what is within him, may overcome the weakness which was the cause of the failure.”¹⁹ Thus, industrialists in Gilded Age America perpetuated the system of capitalistic exploitation by proposing the idea that, if a man failed as the familial breadwinner, it was because of his own unmanly shortcomings, and not because of any deep-rooted social problems.

¹⁷ Trachtenberg, 71.

¹⁸ Trachtenberg, 5.

¹⁹ John Davison Rockefeller, *Random Reminiscences of Men and Events* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1909), 153-154.

Within this contemporary understanding of society, nineteenth-century Americans created an ideal construction of masculinity, which historian Kevin White labels “the Masculine Achiever.” According to society’s conventions, the family patriarch needed competitive and aggressive traits to survive in the world of business; yet, these masculine tendencies were tempered by expectations that men should not succumb to excesses. Instead, the typical American man was expected to be a Christian Gentleman who upheld virtues of “honor, reputation, and integrity.”²⁰ Furthermore, the model of the Christian Gentleman abided by an idealized Victorian morality in which men should be sober, respectable, and sexually pure by engaging in intercourse only for the purposes of procreation. By the 1880s, though, White contends, “Severe stresses appeared in the Victorian system of morality that heralded its demise. Self-control, discipline, delayed gratification, and self-sacrifice, ideal qualities in an economy geared towards production, seemed less appropriate in the late nineteenth century world of the national marketplace and of large bureaucratic corporations.”²¹

While this ideal construction of masculinity struggled to co-exist with the forces of modernization, a more primitive type of masculinity emerged in the “underworld,” or the working-class world that was unknown to most genteel American middle-class men and women. The man of the primitive underworld rejected the Victorian ethic that encouraged the suppression of aggressive traits and earthly desires. Flourishing in homosocial spaces, such as taverns, the “Primitive Underground male” engaged in bare-knuckle brawls, drank heavily, sought the company of prostitutes, and gambled.²² While mainstream society, led by proponents such as Teddy Roosevelt—an advocate of the “strenuous life”—would eventually attempt to merge primitive masculinity with the Masculine Achiever and Christian Gentleman, the period

²⁰ Kevin White, *The First Sexual Revolution: The Emergence of Male Heterosexuality in Modern America* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), 2-3.

²¹ White, 9.

²² The term homosocial implies non-sexual relationships between members of the same sex, and homosocial culture is a useful term to describe the burgeoning fraternal culture among men in the Gilded Age.

before this consolidation of masculinities was one fraught with contestation over acceptable meanings of manhood.

Not all masculine relationships in the “underworld” sought to uproot traditional standards and expectations of masculine behavior. In the 1890s, Mark C. Carnes estimates, over five million Americans, including many workers, belonged to secret fraternal societies. Men were compelled to join fraternal orders, often in order to develop communal relationships built on solidarity and brotherhood. By performing sacred rituals, men affirmed their commitment to the organization and to each other, while beholding men to traditional masculine expectations based on sobriety, integrity, and honor. By the “Long Depression” in the 1870s, many working-class fraternities had emerged, such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the Knights of Labor, and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen. These fraternities often served a dual purpose in not only organizing a fraternal community of workers, but also committing male workers to their economic causes, which could result in strikes and advocacy for workers’ rights. Since most of these fraternal organization operated under the guise of secrecy, business leaders, as well as private detectives, such as the Pinkerton Detective Agency, believed that these secret societies and rituals “masked subversion” that threatened the autonomy and dominance of corporations.²³

The anxieties and paranoia of businessmen desirous to ensure the security of their property and livelihood caused them to fear disorder created by striking workers. It was a European affair—the Paris Commune—that intensified the fear of class conflict and mob rule in America. The Paris Commune serves as an illustrative starting point because it was influential in shaping the industrialists’ discursive stigmatization of strikers and communists. At the conclusion of French defeat in the Franco-Prussian War, a disenchanted working class successfully staged an uprising against the Parisian government, establishing a commune that

²³ Mark C. Carnes, *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 10.

lasted for roughly two months. With nascent technological advancements in the areas of transportation and communications emerging in post-bellum America, coupled with an avid interest in European politics and affairs, historian Philip Katz concludes, “It was nearly impossible for contemporary Americans to ignore the war and the Commune.”²⁴

As “on-the-ground” reports filtered into the newspapers and periodicals, Americans read commentary, mostly negative, regarding the character of the communards who participated in the Paris Commune. W. Pembroke Fetridge, a resident of Paris who made his living writing for New York-based Harper Brothers, helped to create a negative public image of the communards. Referring to them as “ruthless desperadoes,” “atheists and free thinkers,” and “madmen, drunk with wine and blood,” Fetridge asserted that the character of the mob countered American attitudes of respectability and Victorian manhood. Other media impressions of the communards, such as Emmeline Raymond’s comments sent to *Harper’s Weekly*, further stigmatized the revolutionaries. She referred to them as “cannibals,” “brutes,” and “dwarves,” which contradictorily indicates that the communards were not only hypermasculine, inhumane savages, but also, simultaneously, unmanly half-men.²⁵

Furthermore, portrayals of the communards continued to be published well after the Paris Commune collapsed in 1871. Thomas Nast, the famous cartoonist who worked for the popular periodical *Harpers’ Weekly*, depicted communists as a threat to society. In one such drawing appearing in the February 7, 1874 edition, Nast illustrates a communist as a skeleton, who, though a deceptive appearance, is trying to convince a workingman to join the rioting mob. The communist appears in typical Victorian, respectable, bourgeois apparel; he wears a top hat, overcoat, and a glove on his visible hand with which he extends an invitation to the workingman

²⁴ Philip Katz, *From Appomattox to Montmartre: Americans and the Paris Commune* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 61; W. Pembroke Fetridge, *The Rise and Fall of the Paris Commune in 1871* (New York: Harper, 1871), 15, 364, 426.

²⁵ Katz, 44-45; Emmeline Raymond, “The Second Siege of Paris, Described by an Eye-Witness,” *Harper’s Weekly*, July 15, 1871, 646-647.

to rebel. Hidden behind his body is his other bony hand, which reveals the skeleton's actual identity that the bourgeois apparel had attempted to cover. Beneath the communist's middle-class exterior lay his true visage: a frightening, inhuman creature. This "emancipator of labor," as the caption describes, is attempting to influence "honest working-people" to join with the disorderly mob that can be faintly seen in the background setting of the cartoon.

The cartoon is a direct and insightful view into Gilded Age beliefs of masculinity, respectability, and paranoia. Foremost, the honest workingman in the foreground of the cartoon represents the head of household as he seemingly asserts control in protecting his wife and child from the ghastly communist. However, there is another way to interpret the cartoon; it also appears that the wife is holding the working patriarch away from the skeleton. This cartoon effectively suggests the fragile position of the workingman, whose naturally aggressive impulses urge him to lose his self-control by joining the violent rebellion; yet, his family restrains the temperamental worker and shows that, above all, the workingman must strive to serve and protect his family.²⁶

Not all rhetoric concerning the Commune was charged with negativity. George Wilkes, another eyewitness, sent letters to the *New York Herald* and described the communards as "rugged democrats . . . [with] sentimental fraternity" who upheld the "highest warrant that men can have . . . [they were] brave, patient, merciful, and long-forebearing."²⁷ Wilkes' commentary, taken in unison with other editorials on the Commune, suggests the contentious nature of discourse in regards to rebellious workers. While one segment of society might see a workers' uprising as an example of atavistic human savagery, another perspective viewed it within the heroic tradition of a manly and democratic revolution. Ultimately, this discourse, and the subsequent contest over the construction of male identity that resulted from the Paris Commune,

²⁶ Thomas Nast, "The Emancipation of Labor and the Hard-Working People," *Harper's Weekly*, February 7, 1874.

²⁷ Katz, 56-57.

provides a useful context for understanding how gender discourse would evolve with regards to striking workers in America.

The specter of the Paris Commune exacerbated the anxieties of the American people who were concerned with the fear of disorder brought on by striking workers; yet, the event also provided elites with a beneficial rhetorical advantage: it allowed the capitalist press to condemn striking workers as comparable to the “brutes” of the commune. When several assassinations occurred in the anthracite coal regions of Pennsylvania, and violence between strikers and state militias broke out in several cities during the railroad strikes of 1877, these events were often interpreted in relation to the Paris Commune. In 1875, Franklin P. Gowen, a railroad manager, concluded that the Molly Maguires, the group that was allegedly behind the assassinations and strikes, were “a class of agitators . . . brought here for no other purpose than to create confusion, to undermine confidence, and to stir up dissension between the employer and the employed . . . [They are] advocates of the Commune.”²⁸ In 1877, a wage reduction for workers on the Baltimore and Ohio railroad line sparked a strike in Martinsburg, West Virginia. The strike eventually spread to Pittsburgh, Chicago, Baltimore, and as far west as San Francisco. As violence broke out in many of these cities, newspapers such as the *New York Tribune* condemned the strikers as “an ignorant rabble with hungry mouths,” and they compared the actions of strikers in America to those of the Paris Commune.²⁹

Allan Pinkerton, who founded the Pinkerton Detective Agency, was a pivotal figure in disseminating a lasting stigma of workers’ masculinity during the 1877 strikes. In his book *Strikers, Communists, Tramps, and Detectives*, published a year after the great railroad strikes in 1878, he aimed to give historical context to the railroad strikes in 1877, as well as to narrate the timeline of the strike. He made several distinctions between the honorable manhood that he

²⁸ Katz, 168.

²⁹ Nick Salvatore, *Eugene V. Debs: Citizen and Socialist* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 31.

believed he embodied and the depraved masculinity of strikers. In his introduction, Pinkerton attempted to legitimize his authorial position by identifying himself as a quintessential Self-Made Man. Stating, “I believe that I of all others have earned the right to say plain things to the countless toilers who were engaged in these strikes,” Pinkerton wrote, “I say I have earned this right, I have been all my life a working man . . . I have been a poor lad in Scotland, buffeted and badgered by boorish masters.”³⁰ Working his way up from poverty, he claimed to have known the “tramping experience,” but through hard work, determination, and not brute force, he finally succeeded as a businessman by starting his own detective agency. Through his writing, Pinkerton reinforced the legitimacy of Self-Made Men, such as himself, and declared that they “are the surest and most stable” men in America.³¹ On the contrary, Pinkerton believed strikers lacked respectable manhood and posed a threat to modern society. He referred to them as “wild beasts,” and “human beings so devoid of all conscience, pity, or consideration, that it is hard to look upon them as possessing the least of human attributes.” According to him, if the strikers won, then anarchy and idleness would triumph, and it would lead to the demise of “innocent workingmen and their families.”³²

Pinkerton’s perspective of radicals’ masculinity was reinforced in other media forms, most notably in novels. In 1884, John Hay, a former secretary under Abraham Lincoln, anonymously wrote an infamous anti-labor novel, *The Breadwinners*, as a response to the strikes of 1877. In a review of the novel, W.D. Howells wrote that the author saw in the American West, “the stuff out of which a new manhood was to be fashioned.”³³ The plot centers on Captain Arthur Farnham, a former soldier from the Indian wars in the Black Hills. Farnham believes that that the powerful elites of Buffland, the fictional setting of the story, have all

³⁰ Allan Pinkerton, *Strikers, Communists, Tramps, and Detectives* (1878; repr., New York: Arno Press, 1969), x.

³¹ Pinkerton, *Strikers, Communists, Tramps, and Detectives*, 36.

³² Pinkerton, *Strikers, Communists, Tramps, and Detectives*, 19.

³³ W.D. Howells, “John Hay and the Breadwinners,” *The New York Times*, September 9, 1905.

become effeminate and overcivilized. Meanwhile Farnham's main antagonist, Andrew Jackson Offitt, is a labor agitator, or "professional reformer" who deceives simple, uneducated workingmen into organizing the Brotherhood of the Breadwinners, a secret society that urges riot and disorder.³⁴ As a child, Offitt's unsuccessful attempt at pick-pocketing landed him a new name, Ananias Offitt, a Biblical reference to a man who died immediately after lying to Peter about withholding profits from a land sale. Ultimately, Offitt is representative of labor radicals and corrupt union leaders, and as a man lacking honorable manhood. Hay negatively described him as a "greasy apostle of labor" and as a "human beast of prey." Offitt's disresponsible manhood is further developed when he preys upon Maud Matchlin, the female protagonist, with "his small eyes fastened upon her, his sinewy hands tingled to lay hold of her."³⁵ Eventually, Offitt maliciously convinces the Brotherhood to go on strike. When the strikes break out, Farnham organizes a militia, instilling them with virtues of obedience, organization, and "the manly art of self-defence" to save the town from the "gang of ruffians."³⁶ Farnham's experience and leadership guides the ex-soldiers to stay organized in columns during the melee and to defeat the mob of burly strikers who brandished sticks, hammers, and axes, and had no sense of command or organization, which hastened their defeat.

However, not all workingmen were portrayed as vicious brutes in Hay's novel. In the book, one prominent workingman, Leopold Grosshammer, organized honest workingmen to help break the strike alongside Farnham. In taking the plot of the novel into context, it becomes clear that Hay did not consider the majority of workingmen to have a predisposition towards violence. Instead, the true danger, Hay revealed, was labor agitators who lacked respectable manhood, and made honest workingmen willing dupes by forcing them to wage a war against capital. Taken in unison, Hay's novel, Pinkerton's history of the 1877 strikes, and the news articles concerning the

³⁴ John Hay, *The Breadwinners: A Social Study* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1884), 74.

³⁵ Hay, 78, 207.

³⁶ Hay, 195, 217.

Paris Commune suggest that the negative depiction of mobs and labor agitators were becoming widespread, and workingmen and political reformers faced a cultural pattern in which their masculinity was stigmatized as lacking virtue.

This stigmatization of unrespectable and unmanly workers was further accentuated after several episodes of violent activities occurred in the 1870s in the anthracite coal regions of Pennsylvania. A series of assassinations of mine officials led public officials to believe that these murders were committed by the disreputable organization known as the Molly Maguires. The Mollies were of Irish origin and often associated with “Whiteboyism” and “Ribbonism,” two terms synonymous with agrarian violence in Ireland in the late 1700s and early 1800s.³⁷ There is a great disparity in historical interpretations of the Molly Maguires, as scholars have portrayed them as both violent terrorists and innocent victims of oppressive capitalists. To further complicate the matter, there is virtually no documentation or evidence left by the Molly Maguire organization, which allows skeptics to conclude that the organization never really existed in America. Thus, the use of the Molly Maguire name served to create a scapegoat, and gave railroad bosses a justification to suppress the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH), a secret fraternal society, that industrial leaders claimed was a front for the Mollies. In reality, the AOH actually was associated with the Workingmen’s Benevolent Association, a union that formed in the anthracite coal region in 1868. However, the interpretation that the Hibernians existed solely as a mutual aid organization masks the very real pattern of violence in the anthracite coal region, where 16 officials of mining companies in Schuylkill County were killed between 1862 and 1875.

³⁷ Kevin Kenny, *Making Sense of the Molly Maguires* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 14-21. As historian Kevin Kenny points out, the Society of Ribbonmen should be “distinguished from the generic usage” of the term *Ribbonism*. This society, whose name was synonymous with the Molly Maguires, was one that was active in violent agitation against landowners.

In 1873, Franklin Gowen, president of the Reading Railroad, hired Allan Pinkerton, founder of the Pinkerton Detective Agency, to investigate the activity of the Molly Maguires. In Pinkerton's history of the affair, *The Molly Maguires and the Detectives*, the famous detective established the organization as a deadly threat to order and stability. He wrote, "Wherever anthracite is employed is also felt the vise-like grip of this midnight, dark-lantern, murderous-minded fraternity. Wherever in the United States iron is wrought, from Maine to Georgia, from ocean to ocean . . . there the Mollie Maguire leaves his slimy trail and wields with deadly effect his two powerful levers: secrecy—combination." To infiltrate this fraternity, this "noxious weed . . . of foreign birth" and to defeat men "without an iota of moral principle, [these] midnight prowlers and cowardly assassins," Pinkerton needed a man, a man that must be "no ordinary man," but one who is "hardy, tough, and capable of laboring." Ultimately, Pinkerton concluded, "My man must become really and truly, a Mollie of the hardest character, attend their meetings [and] obtain a reputation for evil conduct, from which it was doubtful that he could ever entirely extricate himself."³⁸ With this description, Pinkerton established the fears of "secrecy and combination" of fraternal organizations and unions, and the type of hardy man who was needed to thwart the opponents of modern industrial society. Pinkerton tabbed James P. McParlan, an Irish immigrant, as the lead detective for the case, and assigned him to infiltrate the organization.³⁹ In 1877, Pinkerton mythologized McParlan's exploits by characterizing him as a heroic undercover agent in a best-selling book *The Molly Maguires and the Detectives*. Although most modern historians agree that the book can hardly be taken as an accurate account, the issue at stake is not about finding objective truth in regards to the actions of the Mollies, but in examining how cultural productions stigmatized the masculine identities of these alleged radicals. In these matters, Pinkerton's narrative deftly manipulates the masculine identity and

³⁸ Allan Pinkerton, *The Molly Maguires and the Detectives* (New York: G.W. Carleton & Co. Publishers, 1877), 14-20.

³⁹ James McParland started spelling his last name McParlan in around 1879 for reasons unknown.

behavior of working-class immigrants and radicals as it constructs a primitive underworld outside of Victorian sensibilities.

In finding a detective “of the hardest character” in McParlan, the main narrative of the book focuses on how McParlan constructed a hypermasculine, primitive manhood taken from the “underworld,” in order to be accepted in working-class, Irish society. Pinkerton described McParlan as being of “medium height, a slim but wiry figure . . . [with] regular features,” and that “he was in fact a fine specimen of the better class of immigrants to this country.” Furthermore, McParlan was “passably educated . . . and earned a reputation for honesty, a peculiar tact and shrewdness, skill and perseverance in performing his numerous and difficult duties.”⁴⁰ Essentially, Pinkerton’s book describes McParlan as having manly virtues consistent with the contemporary tenets of Victorianism and the Protestant ethic, despite the fact that McParlan was a Catholic. However, in order to infiltrate the underworld, McParlan was forced to reconstruct his identity, and take on a disguise that even his own mother “would have refused him recognition.”⁴¹

At this point, James McParlan became James McKenna, who made his first public appearance at a tavern in Port Clinton, Pennsylvania. Immediately mistaken for being a tramp, McKenna was able to convince the locals of his willingness to put in a hard day’s work. He then attempted to insinuate himself within the community. McKenna accomplished this by frequently attending the Sheridan House in Pottsville, PA, a tavern where, according to Pinkerton, “drunken brawls and midnight orgies” transpired nightly.⁴² McKenna asserted his working-class manhood by drinking excessive amounts of alcohol, and loudly singing and dancing to Irish ditties. He further proved his masculinity when he engaged in the “manly art of self-defense” by confronting a local scoundrel who had been caught cheating at cards. As Pinkerton described it,

⁴⁰ Pinkerton, *The Molly Maguires*, 24.

⁴¹ Pinkerton, *The Molly Maguires*, 29.

⁴² Pinkerton, *The Molly Maguires*, 72.

“McKenna, in spite of the liquor he had been compelled to imbibe, still retained his mental faculties and physical strength in perfection,” and he knocked down his opponent in five consecutive rounds during a boxing match. With his victory in the ring secured, and “his habit of being nearly always intoxicated, ready and willing to sing, shoot, dance, fight, gamble, face a man in a knock-down or a jig, stay out all night, sleep all day, tell a story, rob a hen-roost or a traveler,” McParlan had endeared himself to the Irish community in the heart of the primitive underworld.⁴³

In this retelling of McKenna’s acceptance into society, the narrative matches the emergent, underworld “cult of masculinity,” where drinking and fighting were considered manly arts. In Catherine Murdock’s *Domesticating Drink*, she explains how workers’ manhood felt threatened by industrial capitalism and “as male breadwinning became problematic, other male roles took on greater significance. One simplistic and easily attainable badge of masculinity remained drinking prowess.”⁴⁴ Furthermore, Guy Reel, in his manuscript concerning Richard Kyle Fox and the popular men’s journal, *The National Police Gazette*, shows how this “cult of masculinity” emerged as a foil to Victorian respectability. In the underworld, a man drank and was expected to drink, but a “true man did not lose control, and those who did were held up to as much scorn and ridicule as the weaklings who would not drink at all.”⁴⁵ McKenna fits this type, as he obviously drinks, but retains control over his body to the extent that he is capable of defeating his opponent in the ring. Thus, according to Pinkerton’s retelling, through McKenna’s achievement of a hypermasculine, working-class, primitive masculinity, he gained acceptance into society and could now commence his investigation of the Molly Maguires.

⁴³ Pinkerton, *The Molly Maguires*, 147.

⁴⁴ Catherine Gilbert Murdock, *Domesticating Drink: Women, Men, and Alcohol in America, 1870-1940* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998), 15.

⁴⁵ Guy Reel, *The National Police Gazette and the Making of the Modern American Man, 1879-1906* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 106.

After effectively integrating himself into Irish working-class culture through the manipulation of his masculine identity, McParlan was offered acceptance into the fraternal organization, the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH). As a neophyte initiate, McParlan performed the ritual in which the Bodymaster of the AOH recited the purpose of the order in that workers should be “joined together to promote friendship, unity, and true Christian charity.”⁴⁶ The society also demanded mutual assistance for the sick and injured, and a sacred promise of secrecy and loyalty to the order. As Carnes noted in his work on fraternal orders in Victorian America, men actively sought fraternal and communal bonds in a society that sharply underwent radical social and economic changes. Fraternities, such as the Hibernians, often had economic benefits, such as insurance and death benefits. However, the significance of the fraternal order went beyond mere material benefits. The ritual ceremony, conducted in secrecy, promoted a potent bond between the individual and the organization, and added “respectability and legitimacy” to the order.⁴⁷ However, for those outside of the order, the secret nature of the order led to paranoia of “combination” in that the orders worked actively against the interests of business and state. The Pinkerton Detective Agency was hired to infiltrate these secret societies in order to manipulate and control the actions and identity of these organizations.

As the Pinkertons infiltrated their targets, the notion of the *agent provocateur* emerged, and no detective became more associated with the identity of a *provocateur* than James McParlan. The essential idea behind an *agent provocateur*, which may be viewed as entrapment in the modern era, is that the undercover detective had provoked or incited men to commit unlawful crimes. Kevin Kenny, a historian of the Molly Maguire affair, concludes that while the full extent of McParlan’s actions in Pennsylvania will never be known, there is no doubt that McParlan helped to plan some of the assassinations in the mining region and had knowledge of

⁴⁶ Pinkerton, *The Molly Maguires*, 142.

⁴⁷ Carnes, 3.

the assassinations before they were committed. As an undercover detective, McParlan was the central figure in a series of trials that led to the execution of twenty Irish mine workers. The showcase trial centered on Jack Kehoe, an AOH delegate and alleged “King of the Mollies,” and the prosecution’s case was based entirely on McParlan’s testimony, as well as from other Irish miners that the detective turned into informants in exchange for immunity. The prosecution was successful in their effort to portray Kehoe as the leader of a vast conspiracy of Mollies, and as a man who bent other Irishmen into “puppets at his will.” One of McParlan’s key informants, Jimmy Kerrigan, was called a liar, traitor and a “dirty little rat” by his own wife on the witness stand, throwing doubt onto the validity of these trials.⁴⁸ Even more damning for McParlan’s reputation was the event that occurred thirty years later in Idaho during a trial in which labor leader Bill Haywood faced charges for the assassination of Governor Frank Steunenberg. McParlan’s attempts to coach Frank Orchard as a witness, who was testifying falsely against Haywood, unraveled under notable lawyer Clarence Darrow’s cross-examination. Knowing that McParlan engaged in these dubious acts at other times throws more weight behind the allegation of McParlan as an *agent provocateur*. In terms of masculinity, the *agent provocateur* and traitorous informers both became symbols of cowardly manhood; the former manipulated men to commit criminal acts and the latter broke their sacred bonds of brotherhood and each deserved their badge of cowardice.

Unfortunately, the lack of historical evidence from the perspective of the AOH leaves the historian with a one-sided view of the fraternity, most of which came from the side of the prosecution during the trials. The prosecution’s witnesses, including McParlan, were successful in convincing the jury that the AOH and the Molly Maguires were the same group engaged in conspiracy with the Workingmen’s Benevolent Association to commit violence against mine

⁴⁸ Kenny, 230, 254.

officials. The evidence linking these groups was based largely on McParlan's testimony, and he proved this connection through a recitation of passwords, grips, and secret rituals that were common amongst fraternal orders. Furthermore, throughout the trials and Pinkerton's writings on the subject, the Mollies' opponents were successful at portraying the organization as a vast and dangerous cabal. With claims that there were over two thousand members in the Ancient Order of Hibernians, Pinkerton announced, "There were enough in the Commonwealth to carry the elections and to produce wide-spread terror in the coal regions. So invincible was their power, that they had but to say the word and a priceless life was thenceforth worth no more than the powder burnt in its destruction."⁴⁹ Thus, according to Pinkerton, the organized and brutish conspirators coordinated the rigging of elections, assassinated honorable mine officials, and protected terrorists from the legal apparatus that sought to bring these criminals to justice.

Trial transcripts show how the prosecution used the issue of masculinity in its arguments against the defendants. In the trial for the murder of Benjamin Yost, a Tamaqua, Pennsylvania patrolman, the prosecutor, Gen. Charles Albright, constructed the masculine identities of the victim and the alleged criminals in line with contemporary stereotypes. In Albright's argument, the victim, Yost, was characterized as a "good Christian citizen," a patriotic "heroic citizen of the county of Schuylkill," and above all, as a good family man whose last mortal thoughts were, presumably, about his wife and children. In contrast, Albright depicted the accused as hypermasculine savages of the underworld. One of the defendants, Hugh McGehan was described as a "young man of stalwart and powerful frame. Would to God that he had used his mind and limbs to better purposes than killing a human being. His brawny arms and his strong physical frame were intended for better purposes." The conceptualization of Yost as the genteel Victorian family man, and McGehan as the underworld brute perfectly delineates the

⁴⁹ Pinkerton, 275.

expectations of manhood that society upheld. Albright's suggestive discourse sought to sway the jury to have empathy for the victim and disgust for the hypermasculine, vicious criminal. With his sympathetic portrayal of Yost, along with the testimony of James Kerrigan and the evidence provided by James McParlan, which Albright deemed a "superhuman" task for the detective, the prosecution secured the conviction and execution of the four men on trial for the killing of Yost.⁵⁰

The Molly Maguire trials in 1870s Pennsylvania resulted in several consequences for both the Ancient Order of Hibernians as well as for the public conceptions of working-class masculinity. The most immediate consequence was the shift that took place within the AOH. This fraternal order took steps to dissociate itself from the Molly Maguires and the trade unions in the Pennsylvania anthracite coal region, which had been devastated by the trials. The AOH became a more respectable society in the eyes of the Catholic Church by altering rituals and membership standards. The trials also affected how unions were viewed in terms of masculinity in American society. McParlan's actions, as well as the subsequent mythology that Pinkerton wrote concerning the Molly Maguire affair, illustrate the contest to define American manhood in the Gilded Age. McParlan's infiltration and adoption of the "hardest" Molly persona provides context for how Americans viewed labor radicals as primitive men of the underworld. While it is true that some coal miners engaged in violent acts against their bosses, the evidence tying these groups to the AOH was based on McParlan's questionable testimony. In appearance, the AOH was similar to other fraternities; it had secret rituals and mission statements that were aimed at expanding aid to fellow workers, and it had the objective of improving society through the foundations of communal brotherhood. However, due to their secrecy and lack of a public

⁵⁰ R.A. West, *The Great Mollie Maguire Trials in Carbon and Schuylkill Counties, Pa.: Brief Reference to such trials and Arguments of Gen. Charles Albright and Hon. F.W. Hughes, in the case of the Commonwealth vs. James Carroll, James Roarity, Hugh McGehan, and James Boyle, indicted for the murder of Benjamin F. Yost* (Pottsville, PA: Chronicle Book and Job Rooms, 1876), 13, 14, 17, 36.

voice, the AOH allowed their group, as well as the masculinity of Irish mine workers in Pennsylvania, to be manipulated by McParlan's portrayal of Irish, working-class masculinity in the form of his alter-ego, James McKenna. McParlan and Pinkerton appropriated the popular stigma that Irish workers, along with secretive unions, had an aberrant, savage manhood that ran contrary to the ideals of proper Victorian masculinity based on self-control of a man's aggressive impulses.

The events that occurred in 1870s Pennsylvania, as well as the media conceptualizations of dangerous workers that emerged from the Paris Commune and fictional literature of the 1870s and '80s, serve as a useful introduction in illustrating how fraternal organizations evolved in response to the negative manipulation of their manhood. Links in the social construction of masculinity are evident between the negative rhetoric emerging from the press in regards to the strikes of the 1870s, the Molly Maguire organization, and subsequent labor unions that organized in this era, especially the Knights of Labor and similar brotherhoods of workingmen.⁵¹ As the media and factory owners lamented the poor work ethic and degraded manhood of the working class, fraternal orders sought to restore respectability amongst workers in the public's mind.

How fraternal orders of the Gilded Age framed their masculinity is important to explore because they show how workers actively tried to control their own image in the media. Historian Paul Michel Taillon's article, "What We Want is Good, Sober Men" effectively argues that railroad brotherhood unions tried to uphold a certain amount of respectability among their members and uphold the standards of the Christian Gentleman. Union members who drank too much, or who did not perform their masculine role in the domestic sphere would often have their union membership revoked, and unions refused to grant mutual assistance compensation to workers who were injured on the job while drunk. This policy countered the "'rough,'

⁵¹ These brotherhoods include the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, among others.

intemperate masculinity of the railroad workplace,” in which many workers did resort to drinking alcohol to deal with their hard, physical lifestyle. Yet, the dependency on alcohol also gave workers, as a collective group, a negative image. Taillon concludes there was limited success in the brotherhoods’ policy as neither “was the workplace entirely ‘rough’ nor the union entirely ‘respectable.’”⁵²

Similarly, the Knights of Labor, the most prominent labor and fraternal organization for workers in the 1880s, sought to enforce positive masculine behavior among its members. The Knights of Labor were established in 1869, a time when trade unions were struggling, and founder Uriah Stephens desired to form a new type of union—one that bound its members together with secret fraternal rituals. While historians generally consider the Knights of Labor as the first “universal” member organization, the order was not always so inclusive. The term “universal” membership refers to the fact that the Knights of Labor sought to organize workers from all backgrounds, including skilled and unskilled workers, African-Americans, and, after 1881, women. However, this was not always true of the order. Stephens’ early incarnation of the order sought to attract respectable, hard-working men from skilled backgrounds, as unskilled workers were stigmatized as incapable of keeping the rituals secret. For these reasons, membership remained low for much of the 1870s, and near the end of the decade, the Knights only claimed 9,287 members. But after Terence Powderly replaced Stephens as Grand Master Workman, the new leader of the Knights sought to end its secret nature and make it a more inclusive order.⁵³

Stephens believed that it was important to include rituals in order to forge unity and brotherhood among men in following the order’s motto. The early rituals of the Knights were

⁵² Paul Michel Taillon, “‘What We Want is Good, Sober Men:’ Masculinity, Respectability, and Temperance in the Railroad Brotherhoods, c. 1870-1920,” *Journal of Social History* 36, No. 2 (Winter 2002), 320.

⁵³ Robert Weir, *Beyond Labor’s Veil: The Culture of the Knights of Labor* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 10.

similar to other contemporary fraternal rituals that members should uphold virtues of chivalry, bravery, truthfulness, and fairness. Robert Weir, historian, wrote of the Knights' origin, "Labor fraternalism shaped the essential character of the Knights of Labor . . . [and] secret rituals helped keep the labor movement alive during its darkest days," which proves that workers found new avenues to protect themselves from capitalism amidst the collapse of trade unionism.⁵⁴ Similar to other fraternal orders that emerged in the 1870s, such as the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, whose motto was "Benevolence, Sobriety, Industry," the Knights of Labor sought to uphold contemporary standards of Victorian respectability by combating popular beliefs that workers, in general, were drunk, idle, and violent men. With their policy of mutual assistance, Knights sought to protect the ranks of workers who suffered, whether from injury or unemployment. Therefore, by saying the rituals, men were bound to their honor as men that they would uphold their sacred bond and offer aid to those who needed it.

As labor conflict intensified in the 1870s and 80s, Powderly was anxious to see the termination of the order's secrecy because of all the baggage that accompanied an organization that operated with secret rituals. When the Knights of Labor rose to prominence in the 1880s, Allan Pinkerton proclaimed that the order was "probably an amalgamation of the Molly Maguires and the [Paris] Commune."⁵⁵ While the actual Knights hardly consisted of remnants of the Molly Maguires or communards, Pinkerton's denunciation of the organization shows the lasting legacies of those radical events in how they could be associated with contemporary issues in shaping public opinion. Since the Knights existed as a secret order, it did not allow transparency of its activities to prove that members were not engaged in conspiratorial plots, such as assassinations and armed rebellions against society. Furthermore, on a personal level, Powderly was a Catholic, and the Catholic Church did not approve of secret orders, which

⁵⁴ Weir, 23, 25.

⁵⁵ Allan Pinkerton, *Strikers, Communists, Tramps, and Detectives*, 88.

influenced his opinion on the organization's policy of secrecy. The Ancient Order of Hibernians had also begun to eliminate some of its secret rituals, in part to appease the Church, and in part to disassociate itself from allegations that it was a front for the Molly Maguires. Powderly recognized the dangers of being associated with the radical Mollies, and he noted, "Everything in the shape of a society, which was at all secret or new, was supposed to be the outcome of Molly Maguireism."⁵⁶

Although Powderly intended to remove some of the secretive aspects of the order, the early years of the Knights of Labor's belief in fraternalism and secret ritual formed a significant contribution to the organization's code of virtues. The code that Knights originally adhered to was S.O.M.A.—secrecy, obedience, and mutual assistance—that sought to attract members with slogans such as "An Injury to One is the Concern of All."⁵⁷ Thus, the Knights of Labor functioned not only as a promoter of fraternalism among its members, but also as a protective barrier to help shield and bind Knights together with a masculine bond, especially since the labor movement was suffering from the decline of trade unionism in the early 1870s. Not only were men bound by the organization to aid the less fortunate, but the order demanded personal accountability so that members upheld respectable standards of manhood, including sobriety, industriousness, and nobility. It was the secret rituals and activities of the order that encouraged members to live up to these standards of "Knighthood," or an "exalted model of personal behavior."⁵⁸

The first of these required virtues, temperance, was long held by Americans as a key component in determining one's success or failure in the workplace. Over a century earlier, Benjamin Franklin had been highly influential in establishing temperance as a key virtue for

⁵⁶ Terence V. Powderly, *The Path I Trod: The Autobiography of Terence V. Powderly*, ed. Harry Carman, Henry David, and Paul Guthrie (New York: AMS, 1968), 133.

⁵⁷ Weir, 16.

⁵⁸ Weir, 21.

aspiring Self-Made Men. He wrote in his autobiography that one must “Drink not to Elevation.” In telling his story of how he became the quintessential Self-Made Man, he related a morality tale of a co-worker who “had 4 or 5 Shillings to pay out of his Wages every Saturday Night for that muddling Liquor, an Expence I was free from—And thus these poor Devils keep themselves always under.”⁵⁹ While total abstinence from alcohol was not demanded in Franklin’s account, the general idea was that a little amount of drinking was acceptable, as long as it was not used in excess. In her manuscript on alcohol use in America, Catherine Murdock notes that in Franklin’s era, alcohol consumption served an important function for manual laborers. When men worked arduous twelve-hour days, there would be leisurely sporadic breaks where workers would inevitably drink alcohol. By the Gilded Age, most men worked a ten-hour day, and the drinking of alcohol was strictly relegated to an after work, leisurely activity.⁶⁰ However, the drink of choice among the working-class in the mid-nineteenth century changed from liquor to beer. This shift was brought on by new, faster modes of transportation, coupled with a competitive market that lowered the price of beer, and allowed the consumption of beer to skyrocket among workers. The estimated consumption of beer per capita of total population rose from 4.2 gallons in 1861-1870 to 10.5 gallons in 1881-1890, and it provided a grave threat to modern employers who were concerned about workplace efficiency.⁶¹

By the Gilded Age, employers’ *modus operandi* emphasized increasing productivity and efficiency, and it was assumed that laborers’ alcoholic consumption prevented maximum effort. Thus, captains of industry sought to corral the irresponsible behavior of their employees with regard to the imbibing of spirits. The successful businessman Andrew Carnegie wrote, “My plan for mastering the monster evil of intemperance is that our temperance societies, instead of

⁵⁹ Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, 2nd ed., ed. Louis P. Masur (Boston: Bedford St. Martin’s, 2003), 64, 95.

⁶⁰ Murdock, 16.

⁶¹ W.J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 239 (appendix 2.3).

pledging men never to taste alcoholic beverages, should be really temperance agencies and require their members to use them only at meals.”⁶² Carnegie’s plan sought to curb inebriation rested in compromise; he understood that it was impossible to expect the majority of workers to give up drinking completely. However, in some cases, successful company owners took extreme measures to control worker’s drinking habits. George Pullman attempted to control the drinking behavior of his workers by creating a model town where alcohol was only served in the company owned hotel bar and was sternly restricted. Pullman’s model city ultimately failed as it was decimated by a strike, and many workers resented his attempts to manipulate their personal lives. Workers who desired a drink would have to leave Pullman’s model community to visit saloons in bordering towns.⁶³ A major struggle existed between employers and employees centered on the issue of temperance, and bosses were quick to blame the workers’ over-consumption of alcohol as the root cause of their failure to escape poverty.

In response to the temperance issue and employer accusations, working-class organizations began to endorse Victorian virtues of temperance and sobriety. The Knights of Labor especially encouraged members to stay sober, often in the *Knights of Labor*, a weekly journal sold to members of the order. A member calling himself “Old Honesty” argued for Knights to uphold virtues of temperance as a symbol of their respectable manhood. In his editorial, he wrote, “No man will become a true Knight without a solemn pledge to be a man at home or abroad. He should neither drink, nor gamble, nor swear.”⁶⁴ Other excerpts from the journal employed morality tales, especially focusing on the economic benefits of giving up drinking. For example, one such tale contends, “A Knight of Labor in this city forgot the brand of beer which he was to boycott, and for fear of blundering, boycotted all the brands. P.S. — He

⁶² Andrew Carnegie, *An American Four-in-hand in Britain* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1886), 16.

⁶³ Stanley Buder, *Pullman: An Experiment in Industrial Order and Community Planning, 1880-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 65.

⁶⁴ Old Honesty, “True Knights of Labor,” *The Knights of Labor*, August 14, 1886.

is now carrying twenty-five shares in a building association.”⁶⁵ In order to regulate misuse of alcohol among its members, the Knights of Labor threatened to expel members for “violations of obligation,” or “conduct unbecoming a Knight,” and Robert Weir estimates from 1880-1886, 2,326 Knights were expelled from the order under the preceding offenses, and at least 50 were explicitly expelled under the accusation of drunkenness.⁶⁶

While the Knights of Labor attempted to control the drinking behavior of its membership through threats of expulsion, it also used the issue of worker intemperance as a forceful attack against industrial society. In a letter published in the *Knights of Labor* journal, the workingmen of Chicago addressed the Women’s Christian Temperance Union and the Clergy and Ministry of Chicago with regard to the temperance issue. Claiming that intemperance resulted from “heredity, social customs, and industrial conditions,” the author spent the most effort in arguing that industrialization caused alcohol abuse among workers. The editorial argued that the tavern was an escape from small and dirty tenement homes where the worker “has no means to entertain friends . . . but in the saloon he finds relief for his tired hand and brain; relief from the dusty factory and noisy shop . . . [and] with cards and beer, his social instincts find a degree of gratification.” The Knights defended alcohol use as an understandable effect of men’s instinct to gravitate towards social, and fraternal, interaction, and that these homosocial relations were an imperative part of life. Furthermore, the letter contended that “toiling under conditions” in the foundries of 100 degrees heat and working in dirty upholstery factories with poor ventilation “creates extreme physical depression and an abnormal thirst which can only be assuaged by stimulants.”⁶⁷ The article explains that workers would seek their own self-improvement only after social and industrial conditions were improved and workers had fewer hours, more wages, and nicer homes, and were not treated as “mere working animals.” After the workplace was

⁶⁵ “Think Over the Following,” *The Knights of Labor*, September 11, 1886.

⁶⁶ Weir, 71.

⁶⁷ “The Temperance Question From the Labor Standpoint,” *The Knights of Labor*, December 30, 1886.

reformed and the plight of workers improved, society would find that, “With self-respect and self-appreciation invariably come higher moral and mental standards . . . and the power of the saloon will be undermined.”⁶⁸ In this editorial, the workingmen and the Knights reframed the issue of temperance as arising from the need to restructure social conditions. For the Knights of Labor, issues of temperance, masculinity, and protests against capitalism were intertwined. The order sought a way to curb excessive alcohol abuse among its members, while simultaneously defending alcohol use as a normative masculine behavior, at least until the harsh lives of Knights in the Gilded Age workplace improved.

Beyond the issue of alcohol and temperance, the Knights of Labor also encouraged its members to have a strong work ethic consistent with America’s traditional attitude towards work. Americans had long held Benjamin Franklin’s oft-quoted belief that one should be industrious, or “Lose no Time—Be always employ’d in something useful.—Cut off all unnecessary actions.”⁶⁹ In nineteenth-century America, moralizers, preachers, politicians, and even books for children all praised the importance of a strong work ethic, while reviling the lazy idler. Theodore Roosevelt captured the essence of this time period when he stated that, “Nothing in this world is worth having or worth doing unless it means effort, pain, difficulty.”⁷⁰ Historian Daniel T. Rodgers contends that businessmen and moralizers wanted to instill such an ethic amongst their workers because through the “‘purifying fire’ of regular labor . . . [it] curbed the animal instincts to violence; it distracted the laborer from the siren call of radicalism . . . It did all this in part by character-building, by ingrain[ing] habits of fortitude, self-control, and perseverance.”⁷¹

⁶⁸ “The Temperance Question from the Labor Standpoint,” *The Knights of Labor*, December 30, 1886.

⁶⁹ Franklin, 96.

⁷⁰ Daniel T. Rodgers, *The Work Ethic in Industrial America, 1850-1920* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), 7.

⁷¹ Rodgers, 11-12.

The Knights, too, held these beliefs and demanded that its members needed to be productive, and not idlers. Old Honesty, writing in the *Knights of Labor* journal, expressed his belief that, “Under the protecting shield of this order of noble and earnest effort may commence an industrious and thrifty life.”⁷² Furthermore, a strong work ethic was related to one’s respectable masculinity, as Old Honesty wrote:

Only the earnest, active, and determined can thrive and make headway against the strong currents that are strewing the shores of time with many shipwrecks, leaving only broken spars to tell where manhood went down. The world will always be filled with pleasure mongers, sluggards, and do-nothings, who are always ready to tip over and destroy the noblest plans and efforts of honest industry.⁷³

Through this analogy, Old Honesty was invoking the rhetoric of a masculinity crisis. Although a worker may desire a leisurely life of idleness and luxury, he threatened to destroy his own manhood by living such a lifestyle. Terence Powderly echoed these sentiments in his autobiography when he wrote, “In the beginning God ordained that man should labor...not as a punishment, but as a means of development, physically, mentally, morally . . . By labor (not exhaustive) is promoted health of body and strength of mind.”⁷⁴ Thus, a life of laboring was essential for a man’s successful attainment of manhood.

With this attitude towards its members’ work ethic, the Knights of Labor claimed their order was “a moral organization; types of man that all other orders will admit, the Knights of Labor reject.”⁷⁵ One Knight anonymously wrote in their weekly journal that, “[The] true Knight of Labor . . . will not propose unworthy persons for membership in the order,” further showing this idea that membership into the order was a privilege, and respectable standards of manhood and morality must be upheld if one wanted the honor of being a Knight of Labor.⁷⁶ If members

⁷² Old Honesty, “True Knights of Labor,” *The Knights of Labor*, August 14, 1886.

⁷³ Old Honesty, “True Knights of Labor,” *The Knights of Labor*, August 14, 1886.

⁷⁴ Powderly, 194-97.

⁷⁵ Weir, 71.

⁷⁶ “The True Knight of Labor,” *The Knights of Labor*, August 28, 1886.

were unable to uphold standards of respectability, or as productive, diligent laborers, they faced the potential thread of expulsion from the order.

The immense value placed on an industrious work ethic explains the fairly moderate stance that the Knights took in regards to members who scabbed, or worked while unions were on strike. For most workers, the scab represented the lowest form of manhood. The scab was a traitor to the brotherhood of workers because he was willing to work for low wages and long hours, which stunted strikers' attempts to improve working conditions. Scabs were stigmatized as weak in their mind and backbone, and devoid of a heart, thus representing the antithesis of Victorian manhood. Since the Knights desired to uphold respectable standards of masculinity, their code of conduct stated a "true Knight of Labor . . . will not scab [or] rat."⁷⁷ Despite this, very few Knights were expelled from the order as scabs. Robert Weir's painstaking estimate reveals the "remarkably low" number of 294 Knights who were expelled for scabbing between 1880-1886, which is just fewer than 8% percent of the total number of expulsions.⁷⁸ This low number or expulsions reveals that the organization did take steps to prevent workers from scabbing, and it was quite successful at encouraging members to not be scabs.

While the Knights framed their organization as consisting of workers with a strong work ethic, they faced opposition from business leaders who insisted that the majority of workers failed to escape poverty because of their poor work ethic. Attempts by workers to improve their plight through strikes or other union activity were met with scorn from employers who maintained the belief that these workers were simply lazy. For example, when the Knights of Labor advocated the eight-hour movement in 1886—meaning eight hours for work, eight hours for rest, and eight hours for "what we will"—they claimed that eight-hour work days would benefit all segments of society. The eight-hour movement did not originate within the Knights'

⁷⁷ "The True Knight of Labor," *The Knights of Labor*, August 28, 1886.

⁷⁸ Weir, 71.

organization. In fact, many worker organizations had spoken on the benefits of the eight-hour day. Eight-hour advocates hoped that workers would receive equal pay for less work, but argued that corporations would benefit too, claiming that workers would be more productive and efficient at work, and not exhausted from overwork. Furthermore, advocates such as Ira Steward, a labor activist of the early post-bellum period, contended that more time away from work would allow workers to “cultivate tastes and create wants in addition to mere physical comforts.”⁷⁹ The more time that was allowed for leisure, would, in turn, cause workers to spend their wages and boost consumption, which benefited industrialists. However, businessmen fought the eight-hour plan, preferring to keep the standard ten or twelve hour workday. The arguments made by businessmen against the eight-hour day often filtered down onto the shop floor, as one locomotive engineer claimed that the movement intended to give workers “two hours more loafing about the corners and two hours more for drink.”⁸⁰ Ultimately, the strikes of 1886 failed to bring widespread implementation of the eight-hour workday, especially because the Haymarket bombing occurred, which significantly weakened the Knights.

The Knights combated the industrialists’ representation of Knights and eight-hour advocates as lazy idlers with their own visual productions—often through the distribution of trade cards—that showed themselves as productive, hard-working men. These colorful, lithograph trade cards were often developed by merchants and passed out by retailers or mailed directly to consumers in order to seek business. Several merchants in a variety of industries, especially clothing, courted the Knights of Labor. These merchants wanted the Knights to distribute trade cards to its growing membership, in the hopes that they would secure brand loyalty from a large organization of consumers. These trade cards frequently depicted men and

⁷⁹ Ira Steward “A Reduction in Hours, An Increase in Wages (1865),” *The Radical Reader: A Documentary History of the American Radical Tradition*, ed. Timothy Patrick McCarthy and John McMillan (New York: The New Press, 2003), 230-232.

⁸⁰ Rodgers, 158.

women in their traditional, Victorian roles of patriarch and housewife, working hard at their respective roles. An example of this is a trade card titled “Our Daily Bread” in which a muscular workingman provides the family with bread, while the wife, adorned with an apron, serves the meal to the family.⁸¹ This card is representative of many Knights of Labor trade cards, in which the man is almost always shown as a muscular breadwinner who works diligently in “noble toil” at his respective craft to provide for his family.⁸² The formulaic choice to represent the Knight at work intended to identify the typical Knight as possessing a strong work ethic. Furthermore, the Knight’s muscular body and industriousness on display in the trade cards signified their respectable, patriarchal manhood that was in line with the contemporary ideal of the Christian Gentleman.

Not all trade cards offered positive constructions of manhood within the Knights of Labor. Business leaders tactfully implemented humorous, and negative, visual representations in order to manipulate the masculinity of Knights. The obvious reason for the production of these cards was to sway public opinion against the workers, especially in times of crisis, such as during periods of strike. The Deering Company produced one such trade card that ridiculed the personal appearance of a typical Knight, and it employed the strategy of gender role reversal to indicate that Knights lacked masculine respectability. Titled with the pun “A Night of Labor,” the particular trade card shows an ugly, unshaven man, who obviously has little self-control concerning how he presents himself to bourgeois Victorian society. In the card, the Knight acts in the traditionally female role of nurturing a crying infant, while his wife sleeps soundly in the background. The subtitle states, “Ready to arbitrate,” and clearly offers the message that this striking worker desires to return to the factory rather than spend another sleepless night in the

⁸¹ Weir, 23.

⁸² Weir, 253-255.

role of a housewife.⁸³ The card humorously emphasizes the typical Knight's unmanly work ethic. Since he went on strike, the Knight was unable to uphold his role as provider. The card's message is similar to the critiques that industrialists, such as Rockefeller, often made concerning why men failed: the Knight's lack of a work ethic to provide for the family signifies a manly defect, and moreover, the Knight's shortcomings reveal that he also fails in the feminine, domestic sphere. As Robert Weir concludes in his study of the culture of the Knights of Labor, few graphic representations of Knights in magazines, such as *Puck* or *Frank Leslie's*, were "flattering" and these images "were used as a weapon against the Knights of Labor."⁸⁴

As the preceding discussion of trade cards illustrate, there was an interesting dynamic in relations between the sexes within the Knights of Labor organization. This dynamic reflects the third masculine virtue of nobility, which, along with sobriety and industriousness, the fraternal order demanded from its members. Uriah Stephens initially intended to create a union based on labor fraternalism and secret rituals that were common in fraternal orders of the Gilded Age. However, this type of organization would hardly be successful in attracting women to join, nor did Stephens want females to join, because he feared that women were incapable of keeping secrets. As part of the labor organization's code of conduct, the name of the order itself implied an archaic and chivalric masculinity in which men were expected to be noble and protect women. An article by "Old Honesty" in the *Knights of Labor* journal helped to define these parameters when he stated, "He should become a true Knight in his own family . . . by cultivating kindness and affection...It is one thing to be generous and honorable among men, it is another to be kind and noble in the home circle." Similarly, a "wife's happiness and comfort depends upon the love and labor of her husband," and it was the husband's duty to provide for his wife and protect her

⁸³ Deering Trade Card, "A 'Night' of Labor," (1890) McCormick International Harvester Collection, Wisconsin Historical Society.

⁸⁴ Weir, 260-265. The images that Weir examines from *Puck* and *Frank Leslie's* generally show the Knights as wasting their time in idleness, or as engaging in failed mob activity against capital.

from the harsh reality of modern, industrial society.⁸⁵ Thus, “the true Knight of Labor . . . will not neglect or abuse his wife and family.”⁸⁶

When Terence Powderly replaced Stephens as Grand Master Workman in 1879, the new leader sought to expand the Knights’ membership base, which included the admission of women into the order. Women were denied membership until 1881, when the Knights of Labor officially chartered a women’s assembly, but the acceptance of women only exacerbated tensions between the sexes. The Knights’ “Preamble and Declaration of Principles” now included several provisions geared towards women and the family, which included the prohibition of child employment under age 15 and a provision “to secure for both sexes equal pay for equal work.”⁸⁷ Women, who often did not care for secret ritual and fraternalism, were compelled to join because of the Knights’ acceptance of female equality, and the majority of female members worked in manufacturing jobs. However, in making the transition towards an order no longer based on male fraternalism, the Knights encountered the challenge of alienating members who had joined solely because the organization represented a male haven from home and hearth. One member, George Bennie, reflected this sentiment when he divulged that he would prefer to be a scab than a member of a fraternal order that allowed women to join.⁸⁸ While, the Knights of Labor desired to gain a foothold with female workers, it had no intentions of overturning patriarchy. An article in the *Knights of Labor* journal deftly illustrated this patriarchal attitude when it stated, “A woman has neither love nor respect for the man she can rule,” clearly showing that men still based their masculinity on the assumption of having power and control over their wives.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Old Honesty, “True Knights of Labor,” *The Knights of Labor*, August 14, 1886.

⁸⁶ “The True Knight of Labor,” *The Knights of Labor*, August 28, 1886.

⁸⁷ “Preamble and Declaration of Principles of the Knights of Labor of America,” *The Knights of Labor*, August 14, 1886.

⁸⁸ Weir, 52.

⁸⁹ “Woman,” *The Knights of Labor*, September 11, 1886.

Thus, for women who joined the order, there was a contradictory message that pervaded the Knights of Labor. Although the order demanded equal pay for women workers, it still upheld the traditional belief that men held dominion over their female charges. Even more contradictory was the organization's stance that, if the Knights were successful in improving the lot of the working-class through higher wages and steady employment, then it would result in women being pushed back into the private sphere. Certainly, most of the graphic images published by the Knights of Labor reinforced the traditional roles of patriarchal men and domesticated women, and rarely showed women working in industrial trades. Furthermore, by 1886, the *Knights of Labor* journal began to include a special section aimed towards entertaining its female constituency. The articles in this section generally included cooking recipes, such as the issue on August 28, 1886, which contained recipes for potato fritters, rice muffins, onions for croup, and other low-cost food items that could feed the whole family. Other articles in the journal contained advice on what women should do in cases of poisoning within the home, how to protect the family from sunstroke, and how to cure the hiccups.⁹⁰ Not all articles in this section were as superficial as the ones just discussed; yet, the dominant message was that women belonged in the home, while men should perform their duty as noble breadwinners. The trade cards and newspaper articles were just a few ways that the Knights attempted to increase their membership by constructing a more media-friendly image of their organization as a promoter of family values and traditional gender roles.

By the mid-1880s, Powderly devised another way to expand the membership base: written, serialized fiction that was essentially propaganda that espoused organizational doctrine and positive images of the Knights. These fictional texts were by no means great literature, as most of their plots were unoriginal and contrived, but they served a useful purpose in framing the

⁹⁰ *The Knights of Labor*, August 28, 1886; *The Knights of Labor*, August 21, 1886.

Knights as a respectable order and challenging the popular and negative stigma of the Knights as idle, dangerous, and greedy unionists. These stories give insight into how the masculine images of the Knights were positively constructed in fiction. The stories adhere closely to the Knights' three major virtues of sobriety, industriousness, and nobility. T. Fulton Gantt, a Knight, wrote *Breaking the Chain: A Story of the Present Industrial Struggle* that was serialized in a Salem, Oregon labor paper, *The Lance*, in 1887. The plot of *Breaking the Chain* revolves around the Simpson family, most notably Maud Simpson, the daughter of an overworked and underpaid plasterer, Sam. In the novel, Maud becomes a governess for the niece of a wealthy landlord, Captain Arthur Barnum, and she becomes educated and knowledgeable in Knights of Labor doctrine. Ultimately, Maud is caught in a love triangle between the honorable workingman Harry Wallace and the treacherous, scheming Barnum. The rest of the plot is concerned with the struggles of the working class against a triumvirate of villains, including Barnum, Gen. Bluster, a politician, and a newspaper editor, Peleg Grinder.

The character development in *Breaking the Chain* serves as mere propaganda for the Knights of Labor, as the characters, with the possible exception of Maud, are stereotypical caricatures. The protagonists are physically superior, respectable, and virtuous men, while the villains are debased degenerates. For example, Wallace is described as a "stalwart young man . . . his muscles well developed; his chest deep, with broad and manly shoulders," and after attending organizational sessions with Maud, his desire for education and self-improvement compels him to join the Knights.⁹¹ Several of the chapters in the book feature these educational sessions, given to the readers as didactic instruction, in which Wallace and Maud learn more about the Knights, who are portrayed as educated, hardworking, honorable unionists opposed to all forms of violence, including strikes. The propaganda disseminated through this novel sought

⁹¹ Mary C. Grimes, ed., *The Knights in Fiction: Two Labor Novels of the 1880s* (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1986), 38.

to construct a virtuous representation of the Knights who have taken on the difficult task of fixing the problems that ail industrial society. This is most evident when one member of the Knights proclaims,

We teach the Jeffersonian doctrine that industrial, moral, and intellectual worth, and not wealth, is the true standard of individual and national greatness . . . [but] we (America) have been teaching that the man who accumulated vast wealth was truly great . . . the men who in a few years blossom from poverty into wealth are those who are without culture, education, or refinement, with no artistic, literary, or scientific tastes to satisfy. Their whole life is concentrated in the cultivation of the animal trait of acquisitiveness. They are predatory and selfishly savage.⁹²

Meanwhile, the antagonists of Gantt's heroes are stereotypical villains with no redeeming qualities or virtues. Capt. Barnum—an allusion to the humbug entertainer—is the son of a wealthy businessman who made his fortune selling the hides and hoofs of dead U.S. Army horses during the Civil War. Thus, Arthur was born into wealth, and although he received the best education in military schools, he graduated at the bottom of his class. Gantt further describes Arthur as “an apt scholar in the billiard and gambling rooms, the race course, and whiskey saloons . . . he had become fully imbued with the notion that he was an aristocrat; that the enlisted men under him were of an entirely different and inferior race.”⁹³ Gantt reveals that Arthur lives in luxury; his home was “a vulgar display of riches,” and he also has a secret vice of smoking opium with a Chinese servant. In regards to his masculine physicality, Arthur is a foil for Wallace as he is described as “a little fellow, with hair, mustache, and feeble whiskers . . . and [he] would be mistaken for a dude as seen on Pennsylvania avenue.” Despite his meek physical appearance, Barnum “exterminated the Indians, on the great plains of America,” and showed a vicious streak in his personality.⁹⁴ It is within this contextual background that Gantt

⁹² Grimes, 69.

⁹³ Grimes, 34.

⁹⁴ Grimes, 47.

often refers to Barnum with the nickname “The Warrior,” which further enhances the author’s thematic opposition to violent behavior.

The other two villains of the story, Gen. Bluster and Peleg Grinder, acutely represent their namesakes. The General is a boisterous and uninformed politician, while Grinder exploits his workers relentlessly as owner and editor of *The Atavist*, a newspaper that lives up to its title since its editorial slant gravitates towards traditional, anti-labor sentiments in America. Bluster and Grinder are described as idlers, and are caricatures of the anxious, upper-class Americans who feared the decay of overcivilization, the idea that wealthy elites would lose their manhood after succumbing to the luxuries and vices of the modern era. Bluster and Grinder nearly always meet in high-class parlors where they continually complain about how “beggardly” their salaries are because they can barely afford fifty-cent drinks of brandy, even though the typical worker took home less than two dollars per day. While drinking, the overweight General denounces the Knights’ demand for an eight-hour workday, calling it “foolishness . . . [because] the gigantic working energy of the people would lose just twenty per cent of its power. We would fall behind England; our decay would be certain.”⁹⁵ Meanwhile, Grinder, who has “grown gray and rich in his so far successful efforts to cheapen labor and render it helpless,” desires to crush workers’ attempts to unionize and keep his profit margin from diminishing. Despite their class status, Barnum, Bluster, and Grinder do not uphold standards of Victorian respectability.

With the characters established, the plot plays out predictably. Barnum conspires to make his beautiful governess, Maud, love him, though she loves Wallace. To make matters worse for the governess, her father is killed in a workplace accident. This tragedy threatens to separate her from Wallace because she needs the salary she earns from Barnum to survive. When Maud resists Barnum’s professions of love for her, the landlord attempts to sexually

⁹⁵ Grimes, 84.

violate her, but Wallace saves the day when he thrashes “the gallant little coward” and leaves him a “trembling little cur.”⁹⁶ Meanwhile, the Knights of Labor come to Maud’s rescue by providing her with a burial fund for her father, as well as \$500 in mutual aid assistance to help her realize her dreams of marrying Wallace. Furthermore, the Knights succeed in a boycott against Grinder, causing Grinder to convert *The Atavist* into a pro-labor newspaper in order to maintain the paper’s profitability. Bluster, who had been elected only after promising patronage to supporters, has his corruption revealed to the people and the community holds the General in disrepute. Finally, Barnum fares the worst of all, as the Knights, operating in solidarity, refuse to rent his properties, causing him to go bankrupt. Furthermore, his secret vice of opium smoking is revealed after his new wife dies of an overdose.

Through the dissemination of *Breaking the Chain*, it is quite clear that the Knights wanted to foment positive constructions of their organization, especially in regards to its conceptualization of manhood, while confronting popular stigmas against their organization. The novel upholds gender roles with the heroes as working patriarchs trying to start or salvage their families. The Knights rescue the main female character, Maud, from a life of submission to Barnum, so she can marry her true love Wallace, and presumably return to domesticity and start their family. Furthermore, rather than being portrayed as ill-informed, and vicious brutes, the Knights in the novel are articulate and educated, and seek self-improvement and mutual cooperation in order to achieve the organization’s motto of “humanity’s greatest brotherhood.”⁹⁷ Essentially, they epitomize true Victorian, self-made men.

In addition, the Knights in *Breaking the Chain* show their respectable nature by never going on strike or resorting to violence. The Knights defeat Grinder through an economic boycott, not through forceful resistance. Grinder acknowledges this point when he states, “These

⁹⁶ Grimes, 115.

⁹⁷ Grimes, 126.

labor organizations are opposed to all violence . . . the riotous and unruly element in this country to-day is confined to the anarchist labor we have been importing from the slums of Europe.”⁹⁸ Grinder’s commentary illustrated the Knights’ belief that violence was counter-productive for labor’s gains. In fact, Grinder and Bluster lament the fact that the Knights are not violent, because if the Knights did strike or destroy property, it would allow businessmen to call for help from state militias with the justification that the Knights were dangerous subversives. Gantt’s portrayal of the Knights’ rejection of violence and the strike was not entirely accurate. Although Powderly was mostly against advocating for the strike, the Knights organized a few strikes, most notably a successful railroad strike in 1885, which helped their membership increase dramatically. Whereas the Knights are presented with having virtuous manhood, the politicians, businessmen, and landlords affiliate with degenerates, such as Chinese opium dealers. Barnum, Bluster, and Grinder drink and smoke profusely, and are uneducated, overcivilized miscreants. Finally, the one exception in the story when a Knight does use violence occurs when Wallace proves his nobility and defends Maud from Barnum, who is trying to sexually assault the young woman. The common theme of *Breaking the Chain* is that the Knights are non-violent, sober, and industrious Victorian Gentlemen, whereas the political, business, and media elites are degenerates.

Frederick Whittaker’s, *Larry Locke, Man of Iron, or a Fight for Fortune: A Story of Labor and Capital* is another fictional work that expands upon the themes of respectability in the Knights of Labor. The story was originally published from 1883-84 in *Beadle’s Weekly*, a journal that published serialized dime novels, which indicates it probably reached a larger audience than if it had been published in a standard labor newspaper like the *Knights of Labor*. Although Whittaker was not a Knight of Labor, his portrayal of the organization was generally

⁹⁸ Grimes, 128.

consistent with the order's beliefs and actions. The hero of the story is a man named Larry Locke, who receives the nickname "the man of iron," after thrashing his boss, Marcellus Skinner, in self-defense. Skinner is also Larry's landlord, and in a theme similar to *Breaking the Chain*, Skinner tries to evict Larry and his faithful wife, Molly. Aiding Skinner in his scheme against Larry are his bastard son, Tom Trainor—who had harbored resentment against Larry since adolescence after Larry had beaten the boy in a fistfight—and two vicious and idle tramps, Terror Jim and Snoopey. Just as Barnum had associated with a "degenerate" Chinese servant in *Breaking the Chain*, the main villain in *Larry Locke* also colludes with unsavory men from the primitive underworld.

While the bulk of the story focuses on Larry Locke overcoming these adversaries, the founding of a Knights chapter, in which Larry takes on an officer position, is essential to the plot of the story. With Larry leading the chapter as Master Workman, he leads a successful strike against Spinner and other industrial businessmen. The segment that focuses on the Knights of Labor shows the tension between the order and its official stance towards the strike. Whereas Gantt, a Knight, gave a fictitious portrayal of the Knights defeating their employers without violence and the strike, Whittaker, a writer operating outside of the order, has no scruples against showing the Knights on strike. In one crucial scene, various Knights begin to break windows and vandalize factories, at least until Larry steps in and calms the riotous mob. Realizing that Skinner wants the crowd to riot, which would allow state militias to break the strike, Larry imparts on the Knights the reasons why violence and property damage were harmful to the order. Furthermore, as a Knight, Larry becomes the embodiment of the virtuous and moral Christian Gentleman as he preaches temperance and respectable manhood. When Larry exclaims, "[The Knights] ought to succeed. If they were all *men* it would soon succeed . . . [but] somehow these men here don't seem to know anything about saving money. They go to spending it on beer, and

pawning their clothes to live with,” the labor leader combines honorable manhood with sobriety, one of the main tenets exalted by the Knights of Labor.⁹⁹ At the end of the novel, Skinner and his bastard son are deported to Europe and lose control of their factory. A victorious Larry rejects a profit-sharing promotion so that he can remain a virtuous and dutiful Master Workman in the Knights.

These two novels reveal how the Knights of Labor actively attempted to shape public opinion of their order and their masculinity. Because the organization had once been secretive, the more open Knights of Labor of the 1880s confronted a popular stigma in which their order appeared no better than the violent political radicals and strikers who threatened businessmen. Many written works of the period, including articles in the mainstream newspapers and the writings of Allan Pinkerton and John Hay, portrayed the Knights as drunks, madmen, and degenerates who did not uphold the virtues of true Christian Gentlemen. However, in *Breaking the Chain* and *Larry Locke*, the Knights are respectable, sober, hardworking men, while businessmen embody negative traits of idleness, selfishness, and are more prone to debauchery. Finally, the fact that the two works vary in regards to whether the Knights approved the idea of striking shows the underlying ideological and methodological tension within the organization.

With regard to official Knight policy towards the strike, the consensus among historians is that Grand Master Workman Terence Powderly generally opposed striking “because he feared it would generate destructive class conflict.”¹⁰⁰ It is understandable why Powderly would take this official public stance towards the strike. Striking workers faced damaging comparisons to the Paris communards and the strikers of 1877, which resulted in a negative portrayal of

⁹⁹ Grimes, 249.

¹⁰⁰ James Green, *Death in the Haymarket: A Story of Chicago, the First Labor Movement and the Bombing that Divided Gilded Age America* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006), 147; Craig Phelan, *Grand Master Workman: Terence Powderly and the Knights of Labor* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2000). Not all historians agree with the contention that Powderly opposed the strike. Phelan’s recent work argues that historians have overstated Powderly’s anti-strike position, and that his public condemnation of the strike differed from his private counsel to help strikes succeed.

working-class unionism. It was in this historical context that the Knights operated, and the industrialists' manipulation of their identity as unmanly brutes would have come much easier if the Knights led strikes that resulted in violence and harm to public property. Regardless of Powderly's general opposition towards strikes, it was a series of successful strikes that caused the Knights to grow in size and prominence. From 1884-1886, the Knights led strikes against Jay Gould's railroads, including their most successful strike against the Union Pacific Railroad. With these strikes, membership in the Knights increased drastically from 42,517 in 1884 to 729,677 by 1886.¹⁰¹

As membership swelled, the Knights faced their greatest obstacle in May of 1886, when a bomb exploded in Haymarket Square in Chicago. Chicago policemen began to arrest known radicals and anarchists, and Powderly was desperate to detach his organization from the anarchist movement. In response to the bombing, Powderly announced, "Honest labor is not to be found in the ranks of those who march under the red flag of anarchy, which is the emblem of blood and destruction."¹⁰² The *Knights of Labor* journal followed this line when it declared, "The Knights of Labor have no affiliation, association, sympathy or respect for the band of cowardly murderers, cut-throats and robbers, known as anarchists . . . they are entitled to no more consideration than wild beasts. The leaders are cowards and their followers are fools."¹⁰³ After eight anarchists went on trial for the bombing, Powderly refused to raise funds or issue statements supporting the Haymarket anarchists. However, that did not stop local assemblies from raising funds or expressing sympathy for the jailed anarchists. Powderly fervently fought these local assemblies, threatening expulsion of members who sympathized or aided the anarchists. Johann Most, a leading anarchist, responded by insulting Powderly as "the Grand

¹⁰¹ Weir, 11-12.

¹⁰² Paul Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 220.

¹⁰³ *The Knights of Labor*, May 8, 1886.

Master Rat.”¹⁰⁴ After the anarchists were found guilty, the Knights somewhat lightened their vicious assault on the anarchists and contended that a few of the anarchists were innocent of the crime. Yet, the Knights still attacked the anarchists’ manhood, stating,

The anarchists will be a lesson to the men whose minds and hearts have been perverted by the old world . . . and that they will mingle more with our American workmen and become imbued with the American idea that even in war there should be ‘fair play,’ and that the man who advocates the use of dynamite or the deadly bomb for remedying any wrong is a coward in his heart.¹⁰⁵

This episode between the anarchists and the Knights of Labor is significant in contextualizing the ongoing contest to define respectable manhood in Gilded Age America. Powderly fully understood the dire consequences that faced the Knights if they were associated with violence and anarchy. As Grand Master Workman, Powderly had sought to give the order a semblance of Victorian respectability that did not stand for disorder and violence. Powderly expected his members to adhere to the virtues of Christian Gentlemen in that they must control their aggressive traits, must remain sober, and must be hard-working and dutiful patriarchs. As the Paris Commune, the strikes in 1877, and the Molly Maguires showed, workers’ masculinity and the reputation of homosocial organizations and unions could be manipulated through discursive means. Whereas McParlan was influential in associating the Molly Maguires with a reputation of intemperance, violence, and dangerous behavior, the Knights of Labor sought to revive a positive public perception of workers. Through their ritual, trade cards, organizational newspaper, and even serialized fiction, the Knights sought to create a union that could control its members who were expected to adhere to manly ideals of respectability.

The bomb thrown in Chicago in 1886 threatened to destroy everything that the Knights had built. Ultimately, the Haymarket bombing did lead to the collapse of the Knights of Labor, though it would be a long, drawn-out process. Workers and foreigners sympathetic to the

¹⁰⁴ Avrich, 210.

¹⁰⁵ “A Note to the Foreign Workingman,” *The Knights of Labor*, August 28, 1886.

Haymarket anarchists saw the Knights as weak and traitorous in turning their back on the labor movement. When Powderly intervened in a packinghouse workers' strike in 1886 and ordered the men back to work, he was further viewed as a traitor and a coward. Meanwhile, for the popular press, the Knights of Labor's quick rise to prominence in the mid-1880s signaled their arrival as a dangerous threat to capital, and the press virulently attacked the organization, especially after Haymarket, and drew comparisons between the Knights and anarchists. Thus, in the aftermath of the bombing, the Knights were unable to dissociate themselves entirely from the anarchy and mob rule that had characterized the labor movement of the 1870s. Divided internally and under external attacks from the media, within two years, eighty percent of the 116 assemblies formed in 1886 would be closed; in 1893, Powderly would be ousted from his position as Grand Master Workman. Though national conventions would be held until 1932, and local assemblies lived on until 1949, the Knights wielded virtually no power after the 1890s. In 1895, the organization returned to its origins, and once again became a secret ritual society, but its time as a powerful facilitator in labor relations had passed. Despite their ultimate failure, much of the culture of the Knights served as the foundation for the Industrial Workers of the World in the twentieth century as the contest to define manhood continued among political radicals, workers, and industrialists.

Chapter 2: Beasts, Cowards, and Martyrs: Victorian Manhood and the Haymarket Anarchists

On the night of May 4, 1886 anarchists hosted a rally in Chicago's Haymarket Square. They gathered to protest the police, who one day earlier had fired upon a crowd of workers on strike at McCormick's reaper factory, which killed four. During the last speech of the night in the Haymarket Square, the Chicago police attempted to break up the rally, and an unknown person threw a bomb that killed policeman Matthias Degan and wounded seven more officers.¹⁰⁶ The Haymarket bombing led to a police roundup of prominent labor radicals, a trial by a judge and jury biased against anarchist ideology, and the conviction and execution of four anarchists.¹⁰⁷ As one of the most romanticized episodes of Gilded Age radicalism, these men, who claimed to be martyred by a frenzied and fearful government, are noteworthy in American anarchist historiography. While several historians, most notably Paul Avrich, have completed surveys of this significant event, the frequency in which anarchists and their opposition used gender discourse with regard to the Haymarket bombing, and the subsequent trial, necessitates an examination of how and why anarchists and the capitalist press framed the masculinity of the accused.

The accused Haymarket anarchists strove to place their own masculine image, behaviors, and ideological beliefs within a contemporary framework of American manhood. These radicals argued that the manhood of American workers had been degraded in a workplace corrupted by capitalism, which inhibited their masculine role of the family breadwinner. To fix the capitalistic system's ills, the Haymarket anarchists constructed their own masculine identities as fitting within the normative expectations of Victorian respectability. Anarchists used the affair as a

¹⁰⁶ Paul Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984). In his thorough examination of the Haymarket bombing, Avrich concludes that the policemen were most likely wounded by each other, and not by the homemade bomb, since they chaotically began to fire their weapons after the explosion.

¹⁰⁷ In this chapter, the term anarchist will be used interchangeably with radical.

“show trial” in order to legitimize their extremist stance. They sought to legitimize their radicalism, in large part, by convincing a skeptical public that they were respectable men and they denied the common stigmas that anarchists were cowards or beasts. Anarchists advocated socially unacceptable theories, namely revolution and the use of dynamite as the solution to capitalism’s devastating effects on the American worker, but they claimed that these unacceptable theories resulted from American men’s difficulty to achieve the traditional masculine ideal of the Self-Made Man.

In their attempt to position their manhood within a contemporary meaning of manhood, anarchists faced obstacles from a mainstream media that portrayed radicals as an exotic “other.” During the Haymarket affair, the mainstream press, the police, and even the judiciary, employed gendered rhetoric to identify the anarchists in negative connotations. These supporters of the capitalist state employed language that represented the Haymarket anarchists as “wild beasts,” “cowards,” and “bomb-toting, long-haired, wild-eyed fiends.”¹⁰⁸ By calling them beasts or cowards, these forces portrayed political radicals as not behaving within socially approved expectations of masculinity. The state and the capitalist press aimed to delegitimize the anarchists’ radicalism—by asserting that the Haymarket anarchists were not “true” men, and thus, had no place in the manly world of Gilded Age politics. Previous historical works have focused on the state and media’s characterization of these anarchists, but minimal historical research has been conducted on how the martyrs constructed their own masculine identities.

Through newspapers, trial speeches, and other forms of public discourse, though, the Haymarket anarchists actively tried to construct a positive masculine identity. These political

¹⁰⁸ Carl Smith, *Urban Disorder and the Shape of Belief* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 155; David Roediger and Franklin Rosemont, eds. *The Haymarket Scrapbook* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publishing Co., 1986), 203. Smith does a superb job of laying out several of the themes of this chapter, but he devotes only a few pages to the discussion of how anarchists constructed their own masculine identity. I intend to build upon his work to show a more thorough examination of the discourse of manhood that permeated throughout the Haymarket affair as well as connect this to a broader timeline of masculinity and political radicalism.

radicals further attempted to acquire widespread appeal by fabricating a crisis in American manhood, which they claimed originated from capitalism's dire effects on ordinary, working-class men. In the end, the Haymarket anarchists were unable to overcome the stereotypes and negative representations of their manhood, mostly because of the stern opposition that anarchists faced from a hostile media, but also because the accused men failed to present a unified vision of their masculinity.

A detailed study of the manhood of the Haymarket martyrs is relevant because the episode of the Haymarket bombing and subsequent trial suggests that the historical actors of the period positioned themselves within appropriate gender expectations, while facing substantial outside pressure from political, industrial, and media elites who sought to classify the anarchists as inferior men. The use of the term "actor" is especially relevant to the Haymarket "show trial," in which the anarchists on trial, along with the judge, prosecutor, and police chief, presented their masculinity in certain ways that legitimized their political stances. The trial itself, along with how the media covered it, served as a discursive contest between the anarchists and their opponents who sought to manipulate the public's understanding of the trial's issues, often through gender discourse.

Furthermore, the Haymarket bombing and trial sheds light on how "masculinity crises" in America are often the result of unstable political conditions. The 1880s were a time of instability and anxiety for American men. The "crisis" that modern American males referenced, emerged with the growth of corporate industrialization and white-collar "brain" work, the increasing prominence of women in the workplace and politics, and fears of race suicide due to an increase in immigration from undesirable European and Asiatic regions.

It should be noted that there is an active historiography concerning the nature of masculinity crises. Some historians, such as Joe L. Dubbert, contend that male anxiety reached

crisis levels in the Gilded Age as a result of men's failure to perform their masculine role of family breadwinners. Other historians, such as Gail Bederman, dispute this and deny that a "crisis" can truly exist. In Bederman's argument, masculinity is not "a transhistorical category or fixed essence . . . [but] an ideological construct which is constantly being remade," which renders masculinity in a constant state of crisis because there is no fixed masculine ideal.¹⁰⁹ My work falls in the middle of this historiographical debate, as I contend that a crisis did not naturally exist, but that radicals and capitalists fabricated a crisis based on their visions of what ideal masculinity encompassed. Each side's rationale to invoke crisis rhetoric was designed to fulfill self-serving political and economic desires. Thus, a masculinity crisis can be understood in the context of the Haymarket affair, in which the anarchists used crisis rhetoric to position themselves as victims of industrialization and the powerful state, which denied men the opportunity to become self-made men. Simultaneously, radicals encouraged the working-class to support the Haymarket anarchists claiming that they stood for authentic manhood. Thus, the radicals asserted, by following the principles of anarchism they would end the crisis and regenerate the manhood of American men.

In the Haymarket affair, both capitalist and anarchist supporters used the rhetoric of a masculinity crisis to gain public support at the expense of their opposition. The mainstream press sought to create fear of radical foreigners by claiming that anarchists threatened to use force and overthrow physically weaker, property-owning men who no longer held manly jobs in the crafts. The purpose of this was to stigmatize these labor radicals and turn public opinion against the anarchists' reformist efforts. Also, the mainstream press, backed by dominant political parties and captains of industry, intended to solidify the shaky foundations of Gilded

¹⁰⁹ Joe L. Dubbert, "Progressivism and the Masculinity Crisis," *The American Man*, ed. Elizabeth H. Pleck and Joseph H. Pleck (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1989), 303-320; Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 11.

Age capitalism that faced persistent challenges from labor strikers. While no “smoking gun” evidence exists to show a conspiratorial effort on the part of leading politicians and journalists to fabricate a masculinity crisis, the examination of the primary evidence shows a pattern in which the press, the Chicago police force and judicial system, and business elites denigrated the manhood of anarchists. Simultaneously, these anti-radical forces further contended not only that anarchists posed a threat to the traditional understanding of manhood, but also that their political beliefs were a threat to America’s sacred institutions of democracy and capitalism.

Within this context, the Haymarket martyrs used the rhetoric of a masculinity crisis to further their agenda. Claiming that capitalism made it impossible for men to live up to the ideal of the Self Made Man due to the inequality in wages, long work hours, and private armies of detectives used to suppress strikes, the anarchists tried to convince American workingmen of the threat that capitalism presented to the traditional meaning of American manhood. In the areas of work, politics, and the home, the Haymarket anarchists made gendered arguments that their inability to be good workers, citizens, father, and husbands was the result of capitalism; thus, the only way to restore workers’ lost manhood was to adhere to the principles of anarchism. The trial and conviction of the anarchists further allowed them to play the role of capital’s victim. By becoming “martyrs” after their execution, the Haymarket anarchist left a lasting impact on American radicalism. The most prominent radicals of the first quarter of the twentieth century, including Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman, Joe Hill, and “Big Bill” Haywood, lovingly referred to the martyrs as the men who stirred them to radicalism. In commemorating these martyrs in festivals, parades, and literature, the memory of the Haymarket anarchists often provided a path of manly resistance to capitalism.

Americans’ concerns about the state of masculinity in the Gilded Age, roughly covering the years from 1870 to the 1890s, allowed the Haymarket anarchists to position their masculinity

within traditional expectations of manhood in order to make their “crisis” rhetoric more effective. The era held two dominant ideals of masculinity: the Self-Made Man and the Victorian Gentleman. The Self-Made Man, which historian Kevin White calls the “Masculine Achiever,” was the family breadwinner.¹¹⁰ Whether through hard work, intelligence, or the art of humbug, the manly achiever rose through the ranks of competitive capitalism to earn a living for himself and his family. Meanwhile, the gentleman of the Victorian era was expected to “temper the excesses of the masculine achiever.” These excesses ranged from an obsession with money to impure sexuality and lust. Therefore, the ideal man in Victorian America was a combination of these two men, a hard-working, successful worker, who also had integrity and virtue to control his naturally “primitive” male self.¹¹¹ Neither of these images of ideal manhood were constructed during the Gilded Age as each had roots in the early nineteenth century.

In his work, *American Manhood*, historian E. Anthony Rotundo laid out three phases, and distinctions, in American history where true American manhood rested. Starting with the American Revolution and continuing until the end of the nineteenth century, Rotundo defined these phases as “communal man, the self-made man, and the passionate man.”¹¹² Communal man’s “identity was inseparable from the duties he owed to his community,” and he achieved manliness not through “individual achievements,” but rather as a patriarch and through his social standing.¹¹³ In this era, men were believed to have a better capacity for reason than woman, and could thus restrain their passions. Communal manhood existed before capitalism and the market revolution transformed American institutions, and thus was a construction of manhood suited to a different economic system. While this archetype of American manhood persisted in some

¹¹⁰ Kevin White, *The First Sexual Revolution: The Emergence of Male Heterosexuality in Modern America* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), 3.

¹¹¹ White, 3-5.

¹¹² E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 2-6.

¹¹³ Rotundo, 2.

forms into the first few decades of the nineteenth century, it began to give ground to the model of the Self-Made Man.

The origin of the Self-Made Man in America can be traced back to Benjamin Franklin, whose mythos looms large over the creation of early American manhood. With his devotion to principles of sobriety, industriousness, and frugality (among others), Franklin established a path for how Americans could acquire prosperity. As America's market economy developed, a man's identity was now based on individual successes and "a man's work role, not his place as the head of the household, formed the essence of his identity."¹¹⁴ In this rapidly developing market economy, a man had more freedom and could act upon his supposed male passions of aggression, ruthlessness, and competition that were not integral for subsistence in a communal economy. As men tied their masculine identity into their occupational success, expectations of the respectable gentleman developed alongside the image of the Self-Made Man. Most of Franklin's virtuous thirteen principles of the American colonial period complemented Christian values aimed to temper men's obsessive quest for wealth. Whereas women became "guardians of civilization . . . [and] the source of virtue," men were expected to uphold these virtues by refusing to give into their passions. For most of the nineteenth century, these dual roles of manhood reigned as the supreme ideals of masculinity. However, a transition towards a new ideal masculinity emerged during the post-bellum industrial revolution, a manhood that Rotundo termed "passionate manhood."¹¹⁵

Passionate manhood emerged as corporate capitalism ushered in an era of rapid social change. The proponents of the existence of a masculinity crisis in the Gilded Age claimed that workplace identity was threatened by the expansion of white-collar work dominated by corporations, and by machine-aided work that overtook the individualistic manliness once earned

¹¹⁴ Rotundo, 3.

¹¹⁵ Rotundo, 4-5.

through a man's profession. Also, men more commonly shared the experience of failure in the workplace of the Gilded Age as workers confronted and lost to the forces of industrialization and mechanization. Consequently, European immigrants began to dominate the lower paying, blue-collar, and manly professions, which heightened the anxiety of native-born, white-collar American men. Furthermore, women were entering the spheres of both work and politics, usually with reformist ideas of temperance in drink. Women further put pressure on traditional meanings of manhood as they challenged men's traditional public role. The archetype of "passionate manhood" emerged from this new social order when men began to place "positive value" on men's passions. Society now viewed characteristics of ambition and competitiveness as virtues, rather than vices. Social mores still judged men who failed in the workplace as having "poor character" and being either too lazy or prone to giving into "vice and debauchery," which obstructed their means to attain success.¹¹⁶ Thus, ambition, aggression, and competitiveness became not only positive characteristics, but practically requisites if a man was to achieve financial success in the industrial age.

As American men faced this shift towards the standard of passionate manhood, radicals and labor leaders contested the change. Anarchists still upheld expectations of self-made manhood, which entailed a degree of egalitarianism in which all men were free to compete in the world of business. At the same time, anarchists desired to restore the virtue of fraternalism—taken from the era of communal manhood—because, in their mind, cooperation was needed to combat the degrading effects of capitalism. Thus, they believed that men should be free to gain personal success, but not at the expense of their fellow men, which they accused capitalists of doing. Industrialists justified their great wealth by emphasizing their self-made manhood, while also claiming that personal deficiencies served as the rationale for why lower-class men failed to

¹¹⁶ Rotundo, 179.

gain individual financial success. In this line of reasoning, industrial elites refused to admit that their personal success could be attributed to exploitation of the working-class. Furthermore, they generally adhered to the ideology of Social Darwinism, which asserted that society would not progress if the “fittest” men stooped to lift up “inferior” men from poverty. Albert R. Parsons, who was convicted as a conspirator in the Haymarket bombing, consistently attacked the selfish nature of capitalists in his bi-weekly, anarchist newspaper, *The Alarm*. Claiming that “honor, virtue, or morality are mere high sounding phrases without a particle of meaning, because, utterly impossible to practice, under our capitalistic system of legalized and enforced robbery and murder,” Parsons rejected the capitalists’ justification that they were truly self-made, honorable men, because he asserts that industrialists had manipulated the economic system to exploit the working-class.¹¹⁷

To rejuvenate American manhood, Parsons argued for a restoration of virtues in men of liberty, equality, and fraternity. In appropriating this ideology, which had been popularized during the French Revolution and more recently during the Paris Commune, Parsons defined liberty as “individual freedom;” equality as “the breaking down of social barriers between man and man;” and fraternity as “the bond which unites and harmonizes liberty and equality. Where fraternity prevails, privilege and greed become weak.”¹¹⁸ He believed that capitalism had instituted social barriers that denied equality between the working-class and property owners. He argued that the only way to regain communal masculine virtues, in which men sought to help other men rather than compete with them, was through the forceful overthrow of capitalism. Thus, Parsons attested that salvation of American manhood rested in the principles of anarchy.

In disseminating this belief, anarchists constructed their own manly identities in relation to prevalent, and accepted, notions of Victorian-era masculinity. Capt. William Black, the

¹¹⁷ *The Alarm*, October 4, 1884.

¹¹⁸ “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity,” *The Alarm*, October 3, 1885.

Haymarket anarchists' attorney, defended the manhood of the accused when he wrote that they "all are, in the fullest sense of the word, self-made men. Each could have far better served in his own selfish interests by adapting himself to the existing order of society and seeking his own advancement in service of capital."¹¹⁹ The convicted anarchists contested the very meaning of the phrase "self-made man" by suggesting that the accumulation of riches did not make a successful man, but rather the sacrifices that a man made for his fellow men was the most important virtue. After Capt. Black failed to achieve the acquittal of the Haymarket anarchists, the convicted radicals accepted their fate by positioning themselves as martyrs who would be executed for a cause that was greater than their own individual lives. The final act of martyrdom fit in within the anarchists' construction of their trial as a "show trial," in which they took a defiant stand against the state by "choosing" death. Through the act of self-sacrifice, the Haymarket anarchists exerted their manhood by having the self-control to make their last living decision.¹²⁰

The cause that the Haymarket anarchists sacrificed their lives for was opposition to the capitalist state, and they often framed this opposition in terms of gender. The anarchists argued that industrialists suppressed men's opportunity to become self-made men because the system of capitalism was one of exploitation, which damaged workers' bodies and health. An article in *The Alarm* titled "Capitalistic Cannibalism, How It Devours the Men, Women, and Children of Toil," indicates the style of discourse that the anarchists used to portray capitalism. Within the article, the author discussed the high mortality rates among the working-class. Since workers, especially painters, plumbers, and potters were "exposed to poisonous compounds," such as lead, and had "unnatural hours of labor, insufficient food, [and] unwholesome dwellings," the bodies

¹¹⁹ Philip S. Foner, ed. *The Haymarket Autobiographies* (New York: Humanities Press, Inc., 1969), 24.

¹²⁰ Rebecca N. Hill, *Men, Mobs, and Law: Anti-Lynching and Labor Defense in U.S. Radical History* (Durham: N.C.: Duke University Press, 2008), 17-18.

of working class men were worn down “worse than that of the most emaciated car horse.”¹²¹

The anarchists suggested that capitalist factory owners were the culprits responsible for the degradation of modern workers’ bodies. Another article in *The Alarm* suggested that factory bosses were murderous “ghouls,” who preserved their “good morals” and Victorian gentility by letting unsafe machines “do for them the bloody work of red-handed crime.” Thus, “the rapine and sanguinary profession of ghouls . . . became more gentle-man like and also more profitable,” and capitalists benefited at the expense of their workers “emaciated and squeezed-out” bodies.¹²²

The capitalist class defended capitalism, as well as their manhood, by questioning the radicals’ manliness. Anti-radicals claimed that anarchists were not true men, and that laziness and debauchery were the foundations of radicals’ male identities. Michael Schaack, the police chief of Chicago, who was responsible for the roundup of anarchists after the Haymarket bombing, especially upheld this perspective. After the trial and execution, Schaack wrote and published his version of the Haymarket events, and his book gave anarchists a popular stigma of being beer-drinking, lazy cranks. The police chief referred to the majority of anarchists as “dupes . . . with impressionable minds that can be swayed by demagogues into a belief that Anarchy has in it the elements of comfort, splendor, and luxury with very little toil,” and that these workers were not “true labouring men.”¹²³ Rather than spend their time working hard and saving money, Schaack claimed that anarchists were “beer-bloated bums,” who spent all their money on alcohol, while their families starved and their homes fell into disrepair.¹²⁴ He also described how one anarchist Emil Mende (who was not involved in the Haymarket trial),

¹²¹ “Capitalistic Cannibalism, How It Devours the Men, Women, and Children of Toil,” *The Alarm*, October 25, 1884.

¹²² “Ghouls: The Ancient and the Modern,” *The Alarm*, June 13, 1885.

¹²³ Michael Schaack, *Anarchy and Anarchists: A History of the Red Terror and the Social Revolution in America and Europe* (Chicago: F.J. Schulte & Company, 1889), 367-68.

¹²⁴ Schaack, 216.

“became a drunken loafer through attending Anarchist meetings . . . he was always full of liquor, and his chief study was how to get a living without work.”¹²⁵ From the police captain’s perspective, workers failed due to their own personal defects, and capitalism only rewarded hard-working, sober, and frugal men. During the trial and its aftermath, Parsons rejected the manipulation of his identity as a lowly drunkard and asserted, “My whole life has been sober and industrious; [I] was never under the influence of liquor.”¹²⁶ In rejecting the claims of capitalists, he flipped the argument against his accusers, stating, “Economy, industry, and sobriety were three virtues which capitalists never practiced.”¹²⁷ In this situation, Parsons desired to construct an identity as a moral, Victorian man who abstained from the unhealthy vice of alcohol, while emphasizing that capitalists were as not virtuous as they implied.

Despite Parsons’s attempts to frame himself as a sober Victorian man, the tavern was an important venue for anarchists, especially as a place that served to disseminate radical ideology. Issues of *The Alarm* frequently sold advertising space to various saloons such as Zepf’s Lager Beer Saloon, Greif’s Hall Wine and Lager Beer Saloon, and alcohol distributors, like Aug. Wilken and Company’s California Wines. Charles Zepf advertised his saloon as the “Hauptquartier der Sozialisten” (Headquarters of the Socialists) and Parsons even visited Zepf’s Hall after giving his speech on the night the bomb exploded in the Haymarket Square. In charting the notoriety of the tavern for the anarchist culture movement, historian Bruce Nelson uncovered that the Chicago Police Department knew of at least 10 halls, and about 30 saloons where “the ‘reds’ sat to talk.”¹²⁸ While some saloon-keepers, like Thomas Grief, belonged to Socialist organizations, such as the Socialist Labor Party, Schaack was convinced that saloon-

¹²⁵ Schaack, 344.

¹²⁶ Foner, 55.

¹²⁷ Lucy Parsons, *Life of Albert R. Parsons* (Chicago: Mrs. Lucy E. Parsons Publisher and Proprietor, 1889), 42.

¹²⁸ Bruce C. Nelson, *Beyond the Martyrs: A Social History of Chicago’s Anarchists, 1870-1900* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988), 108.

keepers were “parasites” and were fake anarchists “for revenue only.”¹²⁹ However, for the anarchists, the saloon was a male-dominated environment in which their radical newspapers or speeches could be read aloud to the workers who came to drink and relax after their long workdays.

In these tavern halls and in their newspapers, political radicals tried to convince workers that capitalism prevented the working-class from having the opportunity to become self-made men. To drive home this point, Parsons and other anarchists frequently used the image of the wage-slave to describe the typical Gilded Age worker. Other Haymarket anarchists, such as August Spies, presented an image of the worker slave, who under “servility and [with a] lack of manhood among the workers . . . among them many old men with bent backs, silently bore every insult” that capitalism forced upon them.¹³⁰ An article in *The Alarm* further argued that men were losing their individuality and freedom because of mechanized industrialism. In “The Dull Level of Life,” the author, William Morris, wrote, “[For] the mill-hand who is as much a part of the machinery of the factory where he works...one of the chief terrors, real or affected, which afflicts the middle-class man . . . is a fear of the suppression of individually (sic) . . . they are born and bred drudges.”¹³¹ The anarchists spurred the working-class to affiliate their plight with that of slaves and to strike back against the forces that enslaved them, as Parsons stated, “Not to be a slave was to dare and do . . . [and that] voting, strikes, arbitration, etc., were of no use.”¹³² In systematically linking the contemporary capitalist structure and the degradation of modern American manhood to plantation slavery and the loss of individualism, the anarchists sought to gain the support of workers by playing upon the fears of a crisis in masculinity brought on by industrialization.

¹²⁹ Schaack, 216; Nelson, 108-09.

¹³⁰ Foner, 66.

¹³¹ William Morris, “The Dull Level of Life,” *The Alarm*, October 4, 1884.

¹³² Lucy Parsons, 40, 42.

The symbolism of the wage-slave held special significance for Americans, especially urban northerners, who lived in the shadow of the Civil War. When anarchists crafted an image of the worker slave, they simultaneously made allusions to John Brown, the Kansas firebrand who had tried to free the slaves through armed revolt. In the November 8, 1884 edition of *The Alarm*, Parsons ran an editorial and poem, originally published in a Jersey City newspaper, that applauded Brown as “the complete man . . . the old hero [who was] held up as a model for men to copy.”¹³³ In patterning and memorializing ideal manhood on John Brown, anarchists sought to justify their own forceful advocacy of using dynamite to accomplish their ends. Just as Brown attempted to break the “slave power” and the institution of plantation slavery through armed revolution at Harper’s Ferry, Virginia, Chicago anarchists wanted to convince urban workers of the righteousness of dynamite as a means to save workers from capitalism and the “money power.” During the trial, Parsons wrote in his notes that “dynamity (sic) is the deliverer of the unarmed people from the corporate power of monopoly armed to oppress and sujagate (sic) the people. Its discovery and rise seals the doom of all efforts to enslave man. It is the weapon of resistance in the hands of the oppressed.”¹³⁴ In meeting a similar end as Brown at the hangman’s noose, the Haymarket anarchists also claimed their own martyrdom. In asserting that Adolph Fischer, one of the convicted Haymarket anarchists, would “die a second John Brown,” an article in *The Alarm* portrayed the Haymarket anarchists as sacrificial heroes who died for a cause greater than their own lives.¹³⁵ Parsons faced his own execution by affirming his manhood, exclaiming, “If the American people can afford to hang me, I can afford to die like a man.”¹³⁶

Brown was not the sole historical reference that anarchists employed; in fact it was common for radicals to identify their movement within a contextual progression of revolutionary

¹³³ M. Hamlet, “Old John Brown,” *The Alarm*, November 8, 1884.

¹³⁴ Albert Parsons Papers, 1876-1893. Wisconsin Historical Society.

¹³⁵ “Echoes of the Past,” *The Alarm*, November 19, 1887.

¹³⁶ “Echoes of the Past,” *The Alarm*, November 19, 1887.

politics in America. Parsons, more than any other anarchist involved in Haymarket, desired to position his public image as a true American patriot and radical who followed the path of his ancestors. Essentially, he intended to position his masculine identity within a framework of manly American revolutionaries. In his autobiography, Parsons claimed to have a Puritan ancestry that dated back to 1632, when the first Parson landed on Narragansett Bay. Stating, “The Parsons family and their descendants have taken an active and useful part in all the social, religious, political and revolutionary movements in America,” the anarchist charted a genealogy that fit within the most significant episodes of America’s radical history.¹³⁷ Both ancestors on his father and mother’s side fought in the Revolutionary War, including Samuel Parsons, Parsons’s great-great-granduncle who lost his arm after the battle of Bunker Hill. Jonathan Parsons, a revered colonial pastor, spoke out against British oppression in 1775. Albert Parsons’s emphasis on his masculine American roots intended to place himself within a long line of patriotic Americans who fought for revolutionary causes of liberty and equality.¹³⁸

Albert Parsons did not merely profess the righteousness of his ancestors, but he also stressed his own development as a revolutionary. Considering that politicians of the Gilded Age often pointed to their Civil War credentials as proof of their manhood, Parsons emphasized that he, too, was no stranger to war. He served, under his brother’s command, on the Confederate side as a “powder monkey” during the Civil War at the age of fifteen. Since Parsons served in the Confederate Army, he could potentially be criticized for supporting slavery, but Parsons’s autobiography rebuffs any pretenses that he was in favor of slavery. After the war ended, Parsons joined the Republican Party in Texas because he claimed he opposed slavery. As a result of his political shift, he “incurred thereby the hate and contumely of many of my former army comrades, neighbors, and the Ku Klux Klan.” It was around this time that Parsons met his

¹³⁷ Lucy Parsons, 12.

¹³⁸ Avrich, 3-4.

wife, Lucy, a “Spanish-Indian maiden” and they decided to settle in Chicago in 1873.¹³⁹

Chicago in the 1870s became the mail railroad hub to the West, which attracted a large number of workers. It was during this time that Parsons underwent his final political transitions, first towards socialism, and eventually anarchism after he started to lose faith in the power of the ballot. These shifts began when he worked as an editor for the *Chicago Times*, and he started to sympathize with workingmen. Parsons wrote that he “discovered a great similarity between the abuse heaped upon these poor people by the organs of the rich and the actions of the late southern slave-holders in Texas toward the newly enfranchised slaves . . . it satisfied me there was a great fundamental wrong at work in society and in existing social and industrial arrangements.”¹⁴⁰ While Parsons was commissioned by the Knights of Labor to write his autobiography after his sentencing, this was not the only public venue in which Parsons tried to gain sympathy by alluding to his pure American ancestry. During the trial, Parsons exclaimed, “My ancestors had a hand in drawing up and maintaining the Declaration of Independence,” and he used this lofty rhetoric to convince listeners of his “American-ness.”¹⁴¹

In situating his biographical information within a context of America’s revolutionary tradition and his own manly Civil War service and repudiation of slavery, Parsons sought to construct his own identity as a manly American who was merely upholding cherished American values of freedom, liberty, and equality. Parsons was well aware that the majority of Chicago’s anarchists were of foreign descent, and since the Revolution, American men often constructed their rugged manliness as a foil to overcivilized and dandified Europe.¹⁴² Parsons was intent on asserting his American heritage, in part, so he could be viewed in masculine terms. This strategy became most apparent during the trial of the Chicago anarchists. Parsons astutely recognized the

¹³⁹ Lucy Parsons, 15.

¹⁴⁰ Lucy Parsons, 16.

¹⁴¹ Avrich, 4.

¹⁴² Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 12-17.

media dimensions of Haymarket, and he tried to use the show trial to his advantage as a supremely talented “actor.” In the immediate aftermath of the bombing, Police Chief Schaack had investigated the homes of the city’s most notorious anarchists, and ultimately arrested eight. However, Parsons, with a warrant out for his arrest, fled Chicago and assumed a new identity in Wisconsin for several weeks before the trial took place. Parsons was confident that he would be acquitted, and his attorney, Capt. Black, agreed. The defense believed that Parsons’s surrender to the court would prove to be a dramatic moment and endear Parsons to the jury, though the actual surrender failed to bring the response that Black hoped. Regardless, Parsons’s surrender to the court, when he could have stayed far away from the trial, did lead to sympathy in the press. In the *Inter Daily Ocean*, Charles J. Beattie wrote that Parsons proved “he is an American, one of our own . . . and he showed his American blood by manfully delivering himself up voluntarily for trial when accused of crime.” Beattie set Parsons apart from the other “alien anarchists,” and contended, “It would be despicable cowardice in this case to remain silent and allow this one American to be sacrificed because he has been tried and compelled to bear the odium of the acts of a gang of ruthless foreign criminals.”¹⁴³ Parsons’s heritage and manly surrender to the court allowed him to frame his masculinity during the trial within contemporary expectations of the self-sacrificing, virtuous American gentleman, but his co-defendants did not have similar backgrounds to use to their advantage.

The other Haymarket anarchists, who were all European immigrants, needed to position their radicalism as an American ideology. Many of the martyrs’ speeches and publications frequently confronted nativist rhetoric, which was commonly used by native-born American workers who denounced immigrants. August Spies, a German anarchist who was put on trial as a conspirator in the Haymarket affair, mocked these popular assertions in his autobiography,

¹⁴³ Charles J. Beattie, “To the Editor of the Inter Daily Ocean, Parsons and His Sentence,” *The Inter Daily Ocean*, n.d., reprinted in “Scrapbook,” Albert Parsons Papers, 1876-1893. Wisconsin Historical Society.

writing, “Barbarians, savages, illiterate, ignorant Anarchists from Central Europe, men who cannot comprehend the spirit of our free American institutions—of these I am one.”¹⁴⁴ Spies challenged the contemporary stigma that anarchists were brutes, and set out to affirm that, despite his European background, he strongly believed in American principles. Spies wrote, “The press say we are Bohemians, Poles, Russians, Germans—that there are no Americans among us,” but the German anarchist made a deliberate claim to own an American identity. He insisted that, “Every honest American is with us; those who are not are unworthy of their traditions and their forefathers.”¹⁴⁵ Similarly, Englishman Samuel Fielden, another one of the accused anarchists, made allusions to John Brown, Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, and Patrick Henry, and compared the actions of these American icons to those of the anarchists on trial.

The anarchists’ discursive appeal to their own American-ness also consisted of attacks on American capitalism as being monarchist, European, and distinctly un-American. Spies’s autobiography, more than any other anarchist literature of the time, traced the similarities between his homeland of feudal Germany and the supposedly “free American institutions” of Gilded Age America. In writing of his birth and formative years, Spies stated that he was born in “the old robbers castle Landeck,” immediately conjuring images of a distant un-American land. Further allusions to bats, torture racks, the debris of castle towers, and apparitions of long-dead knights and dames visually provide the reader with a scenic understanding of his European background. By including such lucid imagery of nineteenth century feudal Germany, Spies provided context for his condemnation and identification of American capitalists as “Merchant princes, Railroad kings, and Factory lords” who ruled over a working-class “peasantry.” Furthermore, Spies ironically referred to the “noble knights,” or the “Grinnells, Bonfields, and

¹⁴⁴ Nina Van Zandt, *August Spies’ Auto-biography; His Speech in Court, and General Notes* (Chicago: Nina Van Zandt, 1887), 1.

¹⁴⁵ Schaack, 459.

Pinkertons that served as the forceful arm of the ‘money kings.’”¹⁴⁶ The anarchist’s various points of comparison sought to denigrate the supposedly free institution of American capitalism as no better than European feudalism.

Spies continued to reject traditional notions of European masculinity when he assailed the manly notion of chivalric knighthood. In *No Place of Grace*, historian T.J. Jackson Lears shows how the martial ideal, or the image of the warrior as an ideal man, held a special place in the imaginations of bureaucratized American men who suffered from a crisis of “authentic selfhood” in the Gilded Age.¹⁴⁷ The image of the chivalric knight proliferated in several cultural forms, including literature and dime novels, and in Protestant youth groups, such as the Knights of King Arthur or the Princely Knights of Castle Character. Spies’s retelling of his homeland’s story attacked the knight’s popular image as he insisted that knights, in reality, fell short of achieving respectable, chivalric manhood. The German anarchist tried to break this myth through references to folklore, such as a story of 200 “valiant” German knights who kidnapped and sexually violated “pretty girls” from the towns, eventually killing them and casting them into a ditch. Claiming that the spirit of this of “knighthood” persisted in America in the form of prostitution, Spies argued that modern capitalists forced women into sexual slavery. By deriding the chivalry of knightly manhood that many Gilded Age Americans held as an ideal archetype of masculinity, Spies sought to persuade workers to invest in his own version of ideal manhood, one that consisted of American ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity among men and women.¹⁴⁸

Despite the numerous attempts to identify themselves as true Americans, the anarchists faced considerable obstacles to gaining widespread acceptance. One simple reason for this was

¹⁴⁶ Foner, 61-63.

¹⁴⁷ T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 98, 109.

¹⁴⁸ Foner, 63.

that seven of the eight anarchists charged with conspiracy in the Haymarket affair were born in foreign countries. Six of these seven anarchists were born in Germany, and the seventh, Samuel Fielden, was born in England. Since the anarchists were immigrants from foreign countries, the mainstream press attempted to delegitimize anarchy by condemning it as foreign and un-American. Police Captain Schaack referred to the anarchists as “exotics,” and he called the ideology of anarchy “a German weed to be plucked out by the roots and destroyed . . . an alien revolt.”¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, a visual trope of anarchists as exotic foreigners was established in the media as the press depicted radicals as filthy, immoral, and dangerous cranks. One description of a typical radical, published along with a political cartoon in a New Haven, Connecticut newspaper, portrayed the anarchist as unkempt, drunk, filthy, and overweight. The description read:

A Frothy Anarchist

You’re a swigger of frothy lager, and you smoke a rank old pipe.
Likewise you’re a brawling Anarchist, of the laziest kind of type.
You never comb your matted hair; and it’s tossed about like the seas,
While your foul breath gives forth the odor of the rankest kind of cheese.
You’re only a crazy crank at best, and you’re mean enough to try
To beat the honest brewery-man, and drink his big vats dry.¹⁵⁰

Through the development of this stereotype, the anarchist became an object of nativist humor as a foul-smelling drunk. Essentially, this visual, and comic, image denied anarchists the manly respectability that they were so intent on achieving.

Further illustrations of typical anarchists in the mainstream press tended to feature visually unappealing characteristics that showcased radicals as foreign, un-masculine men. Thomas Nast, the *Harper’s Weekly* cartoonist, drew one such image within this trope, and it also displayed the tenuous relationship between anarchists and workers. In the cartoon, “Between Two Fires,” Nast portrays the typical workingman as muscular, strong, and robust in contrast to

¹⁴⁹ Schaack, 25-26.

¹⁵⁰ “Scrapbook,” Albert Parsons Papers, 1876-1893. Wisconsin Historical Society.

the anarchist, who appears as an unmanly degenerate. This portrayal depicts the anarchist as a skulking figure, with a hunched back, prowling around the home of a respectable, working, family man. An unkempt and grizzled beard hides the anarchist's face, while his hair is wild and unmaintained. The anarchist's "wild-eyes" contributes to the radical's menacing presence. Finally, typical anarchist imagery usually showed them equipped with a wide array of weaponry, from dynamite and bombs, to knives, pistols, and even swords. In Nast's cartoon, the anarchist deceptively wields a revolver hidden behind his back, which allows the weak anarchist to prey upon the much stronger workingman. The stereotypical presentation of anarchists, such as the one shown in Nast's cartoon, was intended to dehumanize the anarchist. These images made the anarchists appear as violent and dangerous beasts, or as historian Franklin Rosemont put it, as "poor, ugly, unwashed, animal-like, mentally deranged and dangerously violent foreigners." Other illustrations of anarchists capitalized on this beastly portrayal. Most notably, the front page of *Puck* magazine from September 1, 1886, which was published after the jury's indictment of the anarchists, presented "anarchism" as a caged, rabid dog.¹⁵¹

This accusation of beastliness was not unnoticed by anarchists, who desperately tried to construct their public identity as possessing human, and not animalistic, traits. Spies attacked the beastly identification that the press imposed upon him, stating, "We are not beasts. We would not be socialists if we were beasts. It is because of our sensitiveness that we have gone into this movement for the emancipation of the oppressed and the suffering."¹⁵² Spies positioned humanitarian concern within the ideology of anarchism, and he rejected the accusation that he was a wild, vicious animal. Spies insisted that if anarchists were in fact beasts, the reason was because capitalism "tends to degrade mankind more and more, from day to day, and this effects a

¹⁵¹ Roediger, 203.

¹⁵² Roediger, 23.

‘beastening.’” Thus, Spies turned the accusation on his opponents, claiming that the true animal was the “property beast,” or the “labor-devouring class of aristocratic vagabonds.”¹⁵³

Other radicals took issue with the stigmatization of anarchists as wild beasts. Edward Bellamy, the nationalist famous for his popular novel *Looking Backward*, admitted, “Men are not wild beasts and when they act like them, we should seek the explanation in special conditions . . . [such as] the degradation of the masses, the misery of the poor, the hopeless industrial serfdom of the workers, the ostentation, luxury, and cruelty of wealth” that resulted in the proliferation of anarchist ideals.¹⁵⁴ Lucy Parsons similarly mocked the popular image of the beastly anarchist. She satirically claimed that “blood-drinking anarchists” have the ultimate goal of creating a society “composed of beings somewhat resembling the human family, who hold orgies, which they designate as meetings . . . [in] places that are dark, dank, and loathsome,” where they drink blood from the skulls of “capitalistic infants.” Lucy Parsons came to realize that “we [anarchists] are being used just now as kind of a bugaboo, a scarecrow to frighten the capitalists.”¹⁵⁵ In injecting their own hyperbolic humor in the identification of anarchists as beasts, the anarchists hoped to convince the public of the absurdity of this stigmatization of animalistic anarchists.

Another illuminating aspect of the Nast cartoon was his sympathetic, but also feminizing, portrayal of the typical workingman. While Nast depicted the worker as a muscular patriarch, he found himself trapped between two less manly men. The factory owner to the left of the worker, while appearing as a gentleman in appearance, requires a walking cane, which shows his muscular inferiority in comparison to the workingman. On the other side of the worker is the aforementioned anarchist, who is drawn as a thin and grotesquely unhealthy man. This

¹⁵³ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, March 19, 1886; quoted in Schaack, 89, 527.

¹⁵⁴ Roediger, 156.

¹⁵⁵ *The Advance*, March 12, 1887, reprinted in “Scrapbook,” Albert Parsons Papers, 1876-1893. Wisconsin Historical Society.

characterization corresponds to contemporary arguments that anarchists turned to radical ideologies because their frail bodies could not hold up to the physical nature of modern, industrial work. Regarding Parsons, Schaack wrote, “[he] for some time worked as a carpenter . . . the labor proving too arduous for his undeveloped muscles . . . he began to look out for easier work.”¹⁵⁶ The irony of the cartoon is that despite his obvious superiority in strength to both the capitalist and the anarchist, the worker allows himself to be taken advantage of by two men who are less physically imposing than himself. Ultimately, in this cartoon, Nast explored the complex construction of masculine identity. The cartoonist helped to vilify anarchist manhood through a characterization of the anarchist as dangerous and vile; but, though he was physically weak, he was a potent threat as an ideological seducer of the workingmen and his family.

The Nast characterization of the typical anarchist further compares to contemporary illustrations of Native Americans. Similar to the anarchist, indigenous peoples were often drawn as skulking figures, usually armed, and threatening. Generally, a skulking person was seen as unmanly, especially in contrast to nineteenth century men who believed in concepts of gentlemanly honor. Men who dueled for their honor would meet their opponent face to face, as opposed to hidden attacks that originated from men lurking in the shadows. Schaack also drew comparisons between Native Americans and anarchists, claiming that anarchist “cut-throats skulked around the station like so many Indians around the cabin of a helpless shelter, constantly dodging around in the darkness, fearful that they might be discovered.”¹⁵⁷

The image of the Native American served as a useful frame of reference for civilians in Chicago. The anarchist movement was in its infant stage and many middle-class citizens were unaware of anarchism until Haymarket. After the Haymarket bombing, the capitalist press considered anarchism to be a threat, and it drew comparisons between indigenous peoples and

¹⁵⁶ Schaack, 167.

¹⁵⁷ Schaack, 370.

anarchists to influence public opinion. Comparisons to Native Americans were even more effective because Haymarket occurred in the same year as the American Calvary's famous expedition to capture the Apache fugitive, Geronimo. By comparing the new threat of anarchy to the traditional enemy of western Americans, a negative and dangerous identification of anarchists developed, which potentially weakened anarchism's appeal among workers. Not only were male anarchists characterized in terms of Native Americans, but Schaack also denigrated anarchist women stating, "These 'squaws' proved the most bloodthirsty. . . [and] they were always invited to the 'war dances.'" ¹⁵⁸ Both men and women anarchists were thus described as vicious savages.

Anarchists retaliated, and found that useful comparisons could be established in comparing Native American "savagery" to police brutality. The main target of these attacks was Police Inspector John Bonfield, also nicknamed "Black Jack" for his propensity for violence. Parsons referred to Bonfield as a man who was "thirsting for promotion and the blood money" of monopolists when the inspector halted the speeches in Haymarket Square on the night the bomb exploded. Eager to please his capitalist bosses, Parsons claimed, Bonfield "gathered his army and marched them down upon a peaceable, orderly meeting of workingmen, where he expected to immortalize himself by deeds of carnage and slaughter that would put to shame a horde of Apache Indians." ¹⁵⁹ In his autobiography, Adolph Fischer referenced a *Chicago Times* article that compared anarchists with the "murdering and plundering bands of Apaches." Fischer responded in turn, and asserted that "chief Geronimo Bonfield" led the "police-Apaches . . . [and] on the night of the memorable 4th of May they lay crouching in their wigwams on Desplaines street." ¹⁶⁰ This discourse deliberately utilized contemporary understanding of Native Americans and appropriated their stereotypical identity in order to depict police officials as

¹⁵⁸ Schaack, 207.

¹⁵⁹ Foner, 52.

¹⁶⁰ Foner, 88.

vicious brutes, and it simultaneously encouraged public sympathy for the anarchists who were portrayed as the victims of savage capitalists.

Despite the fact that the anarchists used the trope of the “savage Indian” to portray the brutality of their opponent, Spies and Parsons also showed sympathy and admiration for native societies. An editorial from *The Alarm* described Native Americans as “originally a docile race, full of pride, spirit, kindness and honor,” who eventually became degraded men. Parsons contended that when facing extinction, natives preferred combat to death, which led to the stigmatization of the Native Americans as being vicious and brutal. This editorial presents an interesting parallel between Native Americans and anarchists, as both combated the forces of capitalism, or “the demon of ‘personal property,’” that threatened their livelihood. The anarchists’ claim that Native American manhood had been devastated by capitalism was comparable to the modern argument that industrialism turned workers into slaves, degraded their manhood, and transformed workers into desperate brutes.¹⁶¹

Capitalists portrayed anarchists in terms of brutality in part because these radicals believed in an ideology of forceful resistance, especially the use of dynamite. Invented in Sweden by Alfred Nobel in 1867, Americans primarily used dynamite to demolish rocks and allow for the construction of railroads in the American West. Yet, dynamite had an unintended application that served anarchist plans to use force to rise to power and strike a devastating blow to capitalist hegemony. Coincidentally, the gendered discourse concerning the use of dynamite had both manly and unmanly connotations. Anarchists praised dynamite for its practicality and its ability to act as an equalizer that provided more firepower for vulnerable, and considerably less armed, workingmen and anarchists. *The Alarm* contended that dynamite imbued a single man with superhuman might in which “one man armed with a dynamite bomb is equal to one

¹⁶¹ “The Indians,” *The Alarm*, November 8, 1884.

regiment of militia.”¹⁶² While anarchists stated that dynamite could be used against people or buildings, one article in *The Alarm* recommended using it against the former, reasoning that “we must prepare to kill men who will try to defeat our cause.”¹⁶³ In using such rhetoric to describe the use of dynamite, anarchists classified its implementation as “honorable warfare.”¹⁶⁴

For the anarchists, dynamite was the remedy to cure the working class from its lost manhood. This idea is evident in the “Revenge Circular,” August Spies’s publication that was passed out after the strike at McCormick’s Factory that preceded the Haymarket bombing. The circular proved to be an important piece of evidence that the prosecution used to convict the anarchists of conspiracy. At McCormick’s factory, police gunfire killed four striking workers after a fight broke out between the strikers and the scabs who tried to replace them on the job. The circular called for the workingmen to take revenge, and he challenged the manhood of workers to retaliate against the police. He wrote, “If you are men, if you are the sons of your grand sires, who have shed their blood to free you, then you will rise in your might, Hercules, and destroy the hideous monster that seeks to destroy you . . . To arms!” Through this proclamation, Spies suggested that only through the application of force could workingmen prove their manhood, and become worthy of Hercules, the Greek hero praised for his physical attributes.¹⁶⁵

Ironically, despite advocating for the use of dynamite as a means to kill capitalists and restore their lost manhood, the anarchists justified its use as humane. Parsons argued,

We are told force is cruel, but this is only true when the opposition is less cruel. If the opposition is relentless power, starving, freezing, etc. and the application of force will require less suffering, then force is humane . . . It is not humane to compel ten persons to starve to death, when the execution of five persons would prevent it.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶² Avrigh, 166.

¹⁶³ Schaack, 88.

¹⁶⁴ Schaack, 90.

¹⁶⁵ Schaack, 130.

¹⁶⁶ “Force,” *The Alarm*, January 13, 1885.

In this passage, Parsons insisted that the ends justified the means. If more workers would benefit from the elimination of capitalism, then the use of dynamite and murder was just. By discussing the use of dynamite in this manner, Parsons referenced his desire for the restoration of communal manhood. Parsons, and the other Haymarket martyrs, believed in the ideals of liberty, fraternity, and equality; thus, men had a duty to other men to insure mutual cooperation and happiness. Therefore, not only was the use of dynamite a manly way to invest a single man with a more physical presence, but the same man would also be seen as a humanitarian who desired to restore the virtues of communal manhood that had faded in the age of industrialization.

Floyd Dell, a writer who was active in the socialist cause during the First World War, had a different outlook on why the Haymarket anarchists engaged in “bomb-talking.” Dell suggested that the rhetoric of dynamite was used as a “way of shocking the public,” forcing average citizens to pay attention to anarchist beliefs. In this same manner, the anarchists “did not resent, and often helped to cultivate, the opinion that they were dangerous men.” Dell contended that the anarchists loved the “idea of dynamite” more than the actual use of it. As symbolism, dynamite allowed the Haymarket martyrs to construct their own masculine identities as a violent threat worthy of attention. Dell’s commentary was fairly accurate in the sense that there was no evidence that the majority of the Haymarket martyrs actively sought to make or use bombs. With the exception of Louis Lingg and George Engel, who made bombs in Engel’s home, there was no judicial evidence linking the manufacturing or purchasing of dynamite to the other seven Haymarket anarchists. Men like Parsons, Fielden, and Spies appeared to love the idea of dynamite more than its use, and they portrayed its use as a humane action with the interests of the working-class at its core.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁷ Roediger, 74.

While dynamite served as the great equalizer for the laboring classes and a means of bolstering their masculine identities, the capitalist press attached anarchists with a stigma of being cowards for using dynamite. Similar to the iconography of the skulking Indian, the dynamite-wielding anarchist was seen as craven and weak. The stigma of cowardice was frequently applied to anarchists, and several significant officials from the Haymarket trial used this terminology to malign the radicals' masculinity. Schaack claimed, "The men who posed as bloodthirsty bandits of Chicago, became arrant, cringing cowards when they found themselves within the clutches of the law."¹⁶⁸ Furthermore, in his opening statement, the prosecutor of the Haymarket radicals, Julius Grinnell, intoned "Spies, Parsons, Schwab and Neebe are the biggest cowards that I have ever seen in the course of my life." Grinnell further stated that Parsons "never did a manly thing in his life," and he declared the anarchists to be "loathsome murderers."¹⁶⁹ In his address to the jury, Louis Lingg, the most radical of the Haymarket anarchists, responded to the prosecutor's pervasive accusations of cowardice, exclaiming that, "Grinnell had the pitiful courage here in the courtroom, where I could not defend myself, to call me a coward! The scoundrel!"¹⁷⁰ Even Alfred Nobel allegedly referred to the Haymarket anarchists as committing a "cowardly crime." Nobel continued, "I am a man of peace. But when I see these miscreants misusing my invention, do you know how it makes me feel? It makes me feel like gathering the whole crowd of them in a warehouse full of dynamite and blowing them all up!"¹⁷¹

The frequent references to the Haymarket anarchists as cowards during the trial and in how the media covered the affair, served a tactical purpose for elites as they denied the radicals'

¹⁶⁸ Schaack, 230-231.

¹⁶⁹ Schaack, 392, 401; Lucy Parsons, *The Famous Speeches of the Eight Chicago Anarchists in Court* rev. ed. (Chicago: Lucy E. Parsons, 1910), 109.

¹⁷⁰ Louis Lingg, "Address to the Court, Famous Speeches of the Chicago Anarchists," (Chicago, 1912), reprinted in Dave Roediger and Franklin Rosemont, eds., *Haymarket Scrapbook* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company, 1986), 46-47.

¹⁷¹ Schaack, 29.

claims to authentic manhood. In *Political Manhood*, historian Kevin P. Murphy proves that politics and masculinity were largely interrelated in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. Attacks and insults on an opponent's manhood—the use of the term coward and other synonymous insults such as “Miss Nancy” were especially prominent—were powerful rhetorical devices used to deny inclusion into the manly world of politics. If anarchists could be proven to be cowards, then they held no power in the masculine, cutthroat stage of politics; thus, capitalists identified anarchists as weak, skulking bomb-throwers, and not real men. Not only did Schaack chide the Haymarket anarchists for their weapon of choice, but the Police Captain belittled Fielden and Spies by claiming that they hid in the Haymarket Square after the “brave, disciplined, fearless . . . daring, and gallant” police officers broke up the political rally.¹⁷² Anarchists disputed Schaack's version of the affair and claimed it was the police who acted in “a cowardly fashion” because they hid in a building in the Haymarket Square after the bomb exploded. The struggle between the police officers and political radicals to position themselves as the true masculine actors in the affair continued to play out over the next century. A statue built in honor of the policemen was vandalized several times over the years and eventually bombed by the Weathermen Underground during anti-war protests in the 1960s. Refusing to accept the statue as a symbol of honorable and manly defense of the city, future generations of radicals saw the statue as a sign of oppression.¹⁷³

Schaack and other officers of the law further insisted that anarchist men were cowards because the radicals hid behind their wives and children. During his testimony at the Haymarket trial, Barton Simonson, a salesman, spoke about a discussion he had with police captain John “Black Jack” Bonfield. During this conversation, Simonson claimed that Bonfield fantasized about gunning down a crowd of anarchists. However, Bonfield claimed that this was a difficult

¹⁷² Schaack, 118.

¹⁷³ Roediger, 167; Kevin P. Murphy, *Political Manhood: Red Bloods, Mollycoddles, and the Politics of Progressive Era Reform* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

task because “these socialists . . . get their women and children mixed up with them and around them and in front of them and we can’t get at them.”¹⁷⁴ Schaack also asserted that anarchist men were cowards, who, while enjoying their own personal safety, sent their wives and children to set fires in trash cans and houses so the “dauntless husbands could brag of the brave achievements of ‘the family.’”¹⁷⁵ In this manner, Schaack and Bonfield called into question the anarchists’ ability to be reliable patriarchs who protected, rather than endangered, their family.

Moreover, Schaack not only depicted anarchists as men who hid behind their families, but also as men who corrupted the domestic sphere. He characterized anarchy as an ideology that facilitated poverty for anarchist families rather than serving to relieve them of destitution. In his narrative of the various police raids on anarchists’ homes that were conducted during the Haymarket investigation, Schaack often described the decrepit conditions, or the “depths of misery,” in which anarchists lived.¹⁷⁶ Schaack’s description of a typical anarchist household was exemplified in the case of Otto Baum, an anarchist that Schaack investigated after the Haymarket bombing, but who was never put on trial. Schaack wrote, “So great was Baum’s interest in Anarchy that he wholly neglected his family. He never troubled himself about wife or children, but hung around saloons guzzling beer and breathing vengeance against the police and society.” Furthermore, Baum was unemployed and made his wife work to feed the family, and the anarchist would frequently resort to “calling her the vilest of names, and even kicking her about as if she was made of rubber.” Eventually, the “lazy giant” was arrested for beating his wife, and Schaack concludes his description of Baum:

He was a type of a very large class of Anarchists. He would call the better class of people tyrants, because they did not fill his pockets with plenty of money so that he could get drunk as often as he desired, but in his own household he was the meanest of tyrants.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ Schaack, 486.

¹⁷⁵ Schaack, 367.

¹⁷⁶ Schaack, 367.

¹⁷⁷ Schaack, 361-362.

According to Schaack, it was not the flaws of the capitalist system that created poverty and a low standard of living, but rather the inability of workers to overcome their personal flaws to provide for their families.

In return, anarchists tried to deflect the charge that they were failures as patriarchs by blaming capitalism for their own paternal shortcomings. Anarchists claimed that men were unable to adequately provide for their families because of to the capitalist structure of competition. In framing the typical worker as a loving family man, Parsons urged workingmen to:

Stop. Think. What have you gained for you and yours for all these long, weary years of hard, unceasing labors? . . . Your Children, whom you so dearly loved and from whom you anticipated so much solace and comfort . . . [are left to] become moral and mental wrecks. The blooming youthfulness and charms of your darling daughter has, instead of becoming a source of pride and pleasure to you, been made the cause of your degradation and your shame. Your noble and manly son, whom you expected to have been your mains-stay and comfort in your advancing years, has become a vicious brute, a wretched failure.¹⁷⁸

In this article from *The Alarm*, Parsons argued that capitalistic bosses not only robbed the worker of their health and breadwinning role, but also corrupted their families, who were forced to become criminals and prostitutes just to earn a living. Parsons repeatedly made efforts to appeal to workers, and to convince them that capitalism was destroying their families. In his final speech to the jury during the trial, Parsons insisted that anarchism was the remedy for workers who were desperate to save their families. He implored, “It behooves you, as you love your wife and children—if you don’t want to see them perish with hunger, killed or cut down like dogs on the street—Americans, in the interest of your liberty and independence, to arm, arm yourselves.”¹⁷⁹ For Parsons, the salvation for his beloved family rested in an appeal to violent

¹⁷⁸ “Wasted Lives,” *The Alarm*, October 11, 1884.

¹⁷⁹ Joseph E. Gary, “The Chicago Anarchists of 1886: The Crime, The Trial, and the Punishment. By the Judge who Presided at the Trial,” *The Century Magazine* XLV, no.6 (April, 1893): 828.

aggression, which would be performed under the guise of masculine regeneration and restoration of his patriarchal role.

Anarchists also asserted their role as patriarchs by developing a sharp critique against child and female labor. Claiming that capitalistic bosses preferred to hire women and children because they could pay them cheaper wages, the factory owners let “strong men go hungry for lack of work.”¹⁸⁰ By leaving men unemployed to maximize profits through the exploitation of child labor, Spies virulently opposed capitalism, exclaiming, “They work the bodies of little children into gold pieces . . . they murder women and children by hard labor.”¹⁸¹ This gender critique of capitalism shows how the anarchists held a nostalgic view of self-made manhood, one that depended on patriarchal rule, in which men commanded a decent living to provide for their wives and children. As more women and children needed to enter the workforce to provide their family with an additional salary, anarchists argued that self-made manhood was unachievable under modern capitalist conditions.

Despite the anarchists’ attempt to prove their patriarchal worth, a few key events occurred during the trial that gave weight to Schaack’s claims. First, Schaack referenced the case of Oscar Neebe to show the hazards that anarchy had on domestic life. Neebe was one of the eight anarchists brought to trial on the charge of conspiracy to murder, despite slim and circumstantial evidence of his participation. Neebe was the sole anarchist of the eight who was not sentenced to the death penalty; instead, he received fifteen years in prison.¹⁸² While he served his sentence, his wife became ill and passed away. Schaack implied that it was Neebe’s legal troubles that led to her subsequent illness and death. Believing that Neebe had put too

¹⁸⁰ Roediger, 21.

¹⁸¹ Roediger, 21.

¹⁸² Of the eight anarchists brought to trial, Albert Parsons, August Spies, Louis Lingg, George Engel, Samuel Fielden, Michael Schwab, Adolph Fischer, and Oscar Neebe, all but Neebe were given the death penalty. Lingg committed suicide in his jail cell, while Fielden and Schwab were granted a pardon and avoided the gallows, leaving Parsons, Spies, Fischer, and Engel to be executed on November 11, 1887.

much pressure on his wife to support the family, Schaack attempted to convince workingmen of the domestic ills that could befall any patriarch who became involved in the anarchist movement. Unlike Neebe, Schaack praised the anarchist George Engel for having “the manhood to warn his daughter not to embrace anarchy.”¹⁸³

The most telling example of how the mainstream press portrayed anarchists as corruptors of American, middle-class values occurred during the romantic affair between an imprisoned August Spies and Nina Van Zandt, a college graduate and daughter of a wealthy soap manufacturer. According to the young woman, she became interested in Spies after attending several days of the trial. When she went to visit Spies in jail, popular stereotypes captured her imagination, since she expected to see “a fiendish-looking wretch.” Instead she did “not detect an ill-looking man amongst them.”¹⁸⁴ Upon looking at the “noble faces” of these men, especially Spies, she became infatuated with the handsome German anarchist, who had several other female callers during his incarceration. While Spies assumed that Nina first visited him to “gratify a morbid curiosity,” he soon found that “the visits of this young lady were cheering.” The imprisoned anarchist began to “anticipate them with interest.”¹⁸⁵ Nina began to make regular visits to Spies, and the two began to collaborate on his autobiography.

As the affair between the convicted anarchist and the wealthy heiress grew, so did the mainstream press’ vitriol concerning their relationship. Doctors questioned Nina’s mental health, and one physician believed her to be insane for falling in love with an anarchist. The *Chicago Evening Mail* offered an interpretation of her behavior that was less harsh, “She illustrates romance to such a degree that it must be considered ‘flightiness,’ a mild form of mental aberration.” The *Evening Mail* further claimed that her parents, who had approved of the

¹⁸³ Schaack, 653.

¹⁸⁴ Avrich, 324.

¹⁸⁵ “License to Wed Spies,” *The Chicago Evening Mail*. January 15, 1887, “Scrapbook,” Albert Parsons Papers, 1876-1893. Wisconsin Historical Society.

relationship, actually were “inwardly grieved” at the course of events surrounding their daughter and that her wealthy aunt was “astounded.”¹⁸⁶ In his version of the affair, Michael Schaack felt that “It may have been love, but it was love which could only have been the product of a disordered mind.”¹⁸⁷ Throughout this discussion of Nina’s behavior, a persistent belief that she had lost her mind prevailed as the rationale for how a respectable young woman could fall in love with a lowly anarchist.

The affair continued, and in December of 1886, a new sheriff was elected in Chicago, who decided to halt certain privileges to the jailed anarchists. Nina discovered that because she was not married to Spies, her visitation privileges had been revoked. The sheriff’s decision stemmed from a hostile public who was in an uproar concerning the young heiress’ burgeoning courtship with Spies. In facing this obstacle, the two lovers decided to get married so that they could continue to enjoy visitation privileges. This development set off another barrage from the media, which condemned August Spies’s behavior. While the press attempted to convince the public that Nina did not possess all of her mental faculties, they left their harshest condemnation for the anarchist. Essentially, the media blamed the disgraceful German anarchist for taking advantage of a beautiful middle-class girl. The *Kokomo Dispatch* wrote of the affair:

One cannot but feel sorry for that Van Zandt girl . . . but every generous deed on her part increases the contemptuousness of the man who would link her to infamy. Is he a man to wed a trusting and honorable woman, to drag her from a home of luxury to a felon’s companionship? Spies had the opportunity of one honorable and praiseworthy deed. In his selfishness he let it pass, and with it is gone the last vestige of respect and sympathy for his kind.¹⁸⁸

Michael Schaack later wrote that “Spies seemed indifferent to her attention,” and he alleged that Spies was using her either to gain favor from the jury or to receive monetary aid

¹⁸⁶ “License to Wed Spies,” *The Chicago Evening Mail*, January 18, 1887, “Scrapbook,” Albert Parsons Papers, 1876-1893. Wisconsin Historical Society.

¹⁸⁷ Schaack, 161.

¹⁸⁸ *The Kokomo Dispatch*, February 10, 1887. “Scrapbook,” Albert Parsons Papers, 1876-1893. Wisconsin Historical Society.

from her wealthy relatives. In Schaack's version of the events, "Her love was remarkable, but throughout it all Spies proved himself wholly unworthy. He was a reprobate, cunningly playing upon her feelings, caring very little for her."¹⁸⁹ The *Chicago Daily Tribune* referred to the marriage as a "farce" and even claimed that it was not a legitimate marriage because "marriage is celebrated by all reputable persons under State statutes prescribing certain directions respecting its solemnization. Miss Van Zandt was not married in this manner."¹⁹⁰

Through these various articles, which only show a portion of the media attention given to the Spies/Van Zandt marriage, the press clearly sought to identify manhood with middle-class, capitalistic values and denied that the anarchists possessed these masculine virtues. A letter signed by "A Chicagoan" to the editor of the *Chicago Daily Tribune* condemned Spies as a corrupt influence on a middle-class girl and that he had ruined her life and her sanity. Furthermore, he urged every honorable citizen to vow, "The unwritten laws of society shall reach these offenders against public indecency . . . [and] every person in the slightest way connected to the affair shall be ostracized by society, and cast out evermore from the company of respectable people."¹⁹¹ The press claimed that by taking advantage of this star-struck beauty, Spies had no shreds of manly dignity to do what was right and turn away her advances. Hence, this argument illustrates how masculine social mores in the Victorian Era held rigid distinctions in what constituted a proper marital arrangement. Anarchists were not only condemned as vicious and dangerous brutes, but also as usurpers of masculine decency with regard to marital relationships.

Not one to avoid the media limelight, Nina fired back at the press in her preface to August Spies's autobiography. She contested the notion that newsmen claimed to understand and uphold honorable manhood, because they were merely "a mob of newspaper men . . . [who] howled and raved when our proposed marriage became known. Had I committed every crime

¹⁸⁹ Schaack, 162-64.

¹⁹⁰ *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 3, 1887.

¹⁹¹ *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 19, 1887.

denominated in our criminal code these chivalrous, gallant American gentlemen could not have vilified and denounced me more.” Furthermore, Nina contended that had she been an “obscure, foreign girl, not a word would have been said in condemnation of the marriage . . . had I married an old invalid debauchee with great riches these ‘moral’ gentlemen who assail me now would have lauded me to the skies.”¹⁹² Through this comparison, Nina attempted to point out the class dimensions that framed the hypocrisy of the media’s attack on her character. The young anarchist’s wife wanted to show that her love for Spies was stronger than that of class, or monetary, issues; this unlikely relationship challenged the Victorian-era paradigm in which marriage outside of one’s class was unsuitable.

As an intriguing case study, the episode between Spies and Van Zandt shows that masculinity, class, and political radicalism were intertwined, especially since the capitalist press tried to establish normative behavior for men and women of appropriate to their class status. From the anarchists’ perspective, the marriage received so much attention and sensationalism in the press because Nina was from the upper-middle class. The marriage allowed the mainstream press to identify appropriate masculine behaviors and in condemning Spies’s actions, the media were able to make Spies out to be an example of “his kind.” Spies’s marriage with Nina further allowed the media to vilify all anarchists as possessing insufficient manhood and stigmatize them as being a corrupt influence on Americans of middle and upper class backgrounds. To circumvent this attack on their masculinity as it related to sexual relationships of power, the Haymarket martyrs consistently showcased themselves as loving fathers and husbands, especially once they were in jail awaiting their execution. In his autobiography, Parsons claimed that he “had the earnest, honest, intelligent, unflagging support of that grandest, noblest, bravest of women – my loving wife.”¹⁹³ Woodcut engravings also showed the anarchists as loving

¹⁹² *The New York Times*, February 4, 1887.

¹⁹³ Foner, 55.

fathers. Frank Leslie's *Illustrated Newspaper* displayed an image of Parsons hugging his daughter while in his cell, with the caption reading "Affecting interview between Parsons and his little daughter." This picture heightened the emotional moment, as his wife Lucy was separated from Parsons, and the prison had literally broken up the family.¹⁹⁴

On November 9, 1887, two days before his execution, Parsons wrote one last, brief letter to his family that eloquently portrayed himself as a loving father. He wrote:

To my Darling, Precious Little Children, Albert R. Parsons, Jr., and his sister, Lulu Eda Parsons: As I write this word I blot your names with a tear. We never meet again. Oh, my children, how deeply, dearly your papa loves you. We show our love by living *for* our loved ones; we also *prove* our love by dying, when necessary, for them. Of my life and the cause of my unnatural and cruel death you will learn from others. *Your father is a self-offered sacrifice upon the altar of liberty and happiness.* To you I leave the legacy of an honest name and duty done. Preserve it, emulate it. Be true to yourselves, you cannot then be false to others. Be industrious, sober, and cheerful. Your mother! Ah, she is the grandest, noblest of women. Love, honor, and obey her. My children, my precious ones, I request you to read this parting message on each recurring anniversary of my death in remembrance of him who dies not alone for you, but for the children yet unborn. Bless you, my darlings. Farewell.¹⁹⁵

In this letter, Parsons established that he had upheld manly virtues of sobriety, industry, and sacrifice—masculine virtues required to be a Self-Made Man—which he wished to pass on to his children. He presented himself as a model for how he should be remembered as a loving father to his children, but also as a martyr who embraced communal manhood and loved humanity. The manly sacrifice and martyrdom that Parsons referred to in his final letter was not a sacrifice just for the principles of anarchy, but also for his children and future generations.

The anarchists emphasized their martyrdom in the months leading up to their execution by the state. Often referring to the judge's death sentence as judicial murder, the Haymarket anarchists not only accepted their fate, but they were also determined to define the meaning of

¹⁹⁴ *Haymarket Affair Digital Collection*, Chicago Historical Society, <http://www.chicagohistory.org/hadc/> [accessed February 20, 2011].

¹⁹⁵ Schaack, 658.

their death in their own, masculine terms. In his speech, “Appeal to America,” Parsons proved his commitment to the ideals of communal manhood in which he offered up his life for the sake of others. He announced, “I am prepared to die. I am ready, if need be, to lay down my life for the rights of my fellow men.” He finished by quoting Patrick Henry’s famous line, “As for me, give me liberty, or give me death!”¹⁹⁶ Oscar Neebe, the only anarchist on trial who was not given the death penalty, showed his faith in solidarity when he requested that his prison sentence be changed to a death sentence. The judge did not grant his request even though he implored, “Your honor . . . I will ask you to do it—that is, to hang me, too; for I think it is more honorable to die suddenly than to be killed by inches,”¹⁹⁷ Even the hard-hearted Police Chief Schaack agreed that the Haymarket anarchist faced the gallows with bravery and courage. Parsons and the other Haymarket martyrs approached their death by using it as a spectacle to increase awareness for their cause. However, in presenting a courageous front, they also were staking their own claim to honorable manhood as self-sacrificing martyrs, which encouraged a sympathetic following and lasting memorial in the annals of American radicalism.

The actual execution was a performance by actors on both sides. The state issued the harshest penalty in order to suppress the anarchist movement. Although a petition circulated among prominent Chicago businessmen to grant clemency to the martyrs in exchange for several years in prison, the petition was defeated when it failed to receive the support of industrial tycoons Marshall Field, Cyrus McCormick, Jr., and George Pullman. The state-sponsored execution was intended to deter radicalism, but the anarchists approached their day of execution determined to construct a memory of themselves as manly sacrificial martyrs. Numerous press reports focused on the effect that the sentencing had on the families of the anarchists, such as wives and children sobbing in jail cells, already grieving for their husbands who had not yet been

¹⁹⁶ Albert Parsons, *Appeal to America* (Chicago, 1887).

¹⁹⁷ Roediger, 61.

killed. While Fielden and Schwab were ultimately granted clemency, Fischer, Engel, Spies, and Parsons approached their deaths in shrouds, with the intent of arousing public sympathy in their final words. Of the last words spoken by the anarchists, Fischer and Spies gave the most memorable lines. Fischer approached his death gleefully in presentation, and exulted, “This is the happiest moment of my life!” August Spies prophesized, “The time will come when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you strangle today.”¹⁹⁸ Parsons, the last anarchist to be hanged, was cut off mid-sentence; the trap used to hang to anarchists was pulled during his final words, which appealed to America to let him speak.

To truly understand the significance that the Haymarket martyrs had in constructing a lasting masculine identity, the years following the execution reveal how the radical left remembered and celebrated the deceased anarchists. The funeral procession of the hanged anarchists drew an estimated 200,000 people in downtown Chicago. In his eulogy, defense attorney Capt. William Black stated, “They were painted and presented to the world as loving violence, riot, and bloodshed . . . nothing could be further from the truth. They were men who loved peace, men of gentle instincts, men of gracious tenderness from the heart.”¹⁹⁹ Within two years of the execution, Lucy Parsons published the autobiography of her husband. One reviewer in *The Open Court*, Gen. M.M. Trumbull praised the autobiography declaring it, “A tale of chivalry so exalted . . . in all the ideal knighthood of Sir Walter Scott, there is not a high-born Templar or Crusader whose heroism can be compared to the self-devotion and chivalry of this indomitable puritan . . . few braver things are found in fact or fiction than the manly act of Parsons.”²⁰⁰ Lizzie Swank wrote in *The Alarm*, which Lucy Parsons now edited, “I recalled them personally, so genial, so full of life, courage, hope, animation, enthusiasm, and devotion

¹⁹⁸ Avrich, 393.

¹⁹⁹ Roediger, 121.

²⁰⁰ Roediger, 29.

that any little gathering of people straightway became infused with the same spirit.”²⁰¹ In death, the Haymarket martyrs inspired the next generation of radicals in America, who often spoke highly of their manhood. Socialist candidate for President, Eugene Debs, referred to them as “brave defenders,” while famed anarchist Emma Goldman claimed that, “The thought of them has inspired the best and bravest of mankind.”²⁰² For many radicals, the Haymarket martyrs proved to be a sublime example of communal manhood, and were men who proved their unselfishness and bravery through their martyrdom.

The radical whose masculine image profited the most after his death was the enigmatic Louis Lingg. Lingg was arrested after the Haymarket bombing when a cache of homemade bombs was found in his home. Lingg typified the stereotype of the anarchist more than any other anarchist in the Haymarket affair. In a biographical article on Lingg, Franklin Rosemont argued that society viewed Lingg as a dangerous fanatic, one of the few radicals who actually constructed bombs. He was vilified in the press as a “wild beast . . . a fiend” and later remembered by Charles Russell as a “modern berserker, utterly reckless of consequence.” This public impression of him was aided by his speech before the court when he stated, “I despise you. I despise your order; your laws; your force-propped authority. Hang me for it!” While originally sentenced to death, Lingg avoided the gallows when he committed suicide by exploding a cigar bomb in his mouth, which had been smuggled into his jail cell. After his death, Lingg would be remembered by anarchist Voltairine de Cleyre as, “the beautiful one, the brave defiant one . . . bravest among those who were all brave.”²⁰³

The memory of Lingg as the ultimate non-conformist, the fanatical yet romantic hero would be cemented in Frank Harris’s novel, *The Bomb*, a fictional account of the Haymarket riot. The lasting memory of Lingg’s masculinity is one that differs greatly from the other Haymarket

²⁰¹ *The Alarm*, June 16, 1888.

²⁰² Roediger, 180, 185.

²⁰³ Roediger, 51-56.

anarchists. Although it is fiction, the novel establishes this memory of Lingg as a man with “enough vitality in him to bring the dead to life, passion enough for a hundred men.” Lingg is described as living on “the extremes of life,” a man who is “all flame and emotion, with an absolute genius for self-sacrifice.” Lingg “would not go sheep-like to the scaffold,” instead he took his life by his own hand. In memorializing Lingg, Harris wrote in 1909, “Louis Lingg was a great man, and a born leader of men . . . he had the martyr’s pity for men, the martyr’s sympathy with suffering and destitution, the martyr’s burning contempt for greed and meanness . . . the martyr’s belief in the ultimate perfectibility of men.” With his suicide, Lingg became the epitome of a passionate man for the next generation of radicals, such as Alexander Berkman who emulated his fanaticism, just as the dominant ideal of masculinity in American society tilted toward the red-blooded model of manhood.²⁰⁴ Meanwhile, the masculinity preached by Spies and Parsons, of the restoration of self-made manhood combined with a fraternally-minded conscience of communal manhood, would be trumpeted by many socialists.

Ultimately, the Haymarket martyrs did not present a unified vision of the ideal masculine image. In a variety of settings, in the workplace, in the realm of politics, and in the home, the Haymarket martyrs contested the meaning of manhood. In an era in which the Victorian ideals of the self-made man and the Christian gentlemen were giving way to the passionate male, the anarchists used crisis rhetoric to contend that capitalism was degrading the manhood of American workers. They actively constructed their own masculine identities as loving patriarchs, as men in favor of communal principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity. They believed in the power of dynamite as a forceful solution to society’s ills, one that would restore communal manhood and men’s opportunity to become self-made men amidst industrialization. The anarchists plan to legitimize their radicalism through discursive positioning of their

²⁰⁴ Frank Harris, *The Bomb* (1909; repr. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 2, 101, 282, 320.

manhood resulted in opposition that readily portrayed them as the antithesis of manly men. The primary obstacle that they faced was the capitalist press. Schaack, the prosecution, and the press presented contradictory portrayals of the anarchists as both beasts and cowards that successfully stigmatized the masculinity of political radicals. Furthermore, the internal contradictions, most notably Lingg's construction as a passionate man, weakened the attempt by the other anarchists to portray themselves as respectable men who were victims of capitalism. Lingg only helped to perpetuate the stereotype of anarchists as wild, dangerous fanatics. Ultimately, the anarchists were unable to receive support of the general public, or significantly alter public perception and stigmatization of the anarchists. However, in providing an alternative, if not nostalgic, vision of American manhood, the resistance offered by the Haymarket martyrs in constructing their masculine identities would help to shape the discourse and meaning of manhood for subsequent generations.

Chapter 3: Hayseeds and Modern Producers: Masculinity in the Populist Movement

In the Gilded Age, the conflict between labor and capital extended far beyond the confines of the city, as agrarian radicals, too, protested against the growing might of corporations. Despite the fact that cities were growing at a rapid pace, the majority of Americans still lived in rural areas. After the passage of the Homestead Act in 1862, farmers struck west in great numbers to claim free land. From 1860 to 1890, the number of privately owned farms tripled and acreage being farmed increased from 407 to 828 million acres.²⁰⁵ Farmers, especially those in the Midwest, were struck hard in the 1880s by blizzards, locusts and grasshoppers, droughts, and an overall decline in crop prices. The situation in Kansas, a state that became a hotbed of agrarian radicalism, illuminates the dire economic conditions that small farmers encountered. In Kansas, the value of crops produced in the state decreased by \$34 million during the 1880s, which included a reduction in the price of corn by 300% per bushel. A blizzard in 1887 killed scores of cattle and left thousands of farmers starving.²⁰⁶ Public and private debt in the state soared to \$706,181,627, and cash-strapped farmers faced foreclosure.²⁰⁷ These same farmers were subjected to newspaper articles that illustrated the pomp and lavish lifestyles of railroad “robber barons,” which caused a leading Populist, Mary Elizabeth Lease, to lament, “Kansas suffers from two great robbers, the Santa Fe Railroad and the loan companies.”²⁰⁸

The farmers’ economic plight provided the immediate context for the political movement most commonly known as Populism, in which farmers attempted to resolve economic and social problems in the age of industrialization. Founded in 1891, the People’s Party built a grassroots, democratic movement from a variety of organizational sources. Its members hailed from various

²⁰⁵ Charles Postel, *The Populist Vision* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 26.

²⁰⁶ Carleton Beals, *The Great Revolt and its Leaders: History of Popular American Uprisings in the 1890’s* (London: Abelard-Schuman, 1968), 226.

²⁰⁷ W.P. Harrington, *The Populist Party in Kansas* (M.A. Thesis: University of Kansas, 1924), 408.

²⁰⁸ Beals, 230.

groups of different regional and socio-economic backgrounds, including: the Grange, the Greenbackers, the Knights of Labor, the National Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Order, prohibitionists, urban labor leaders such as Henry Demarest Lloyd, and even leaders of industrial fraternal orders, most notably Eugene Debs.²⁰⁹ With such a wide base of support, the movement often struggled to maintain party unity. Southern, western, and northern populists differed greatly on issues of race, women's roles in politics, and fiscal policy, which exacerbates the difficulty of studying Populism as a movement.

As a result of these disparate origins, existing historiography places Populism in polarized camps. In 1955, Richard Hofstadter offered one major interpretation of Populism in his work *The Age of Reform*.²¹⁰ Hofstadter gave the Populists a long-lasting characterization of having dual psychologies of a "hard" and "soft" side. The "hard" side of Populism meant that the Populist saw himself as a "harassed country businessman" who desired communal self-interest in agrarian economic reform. Since industry, especially railroads, wielded excessive economic and political clout, small farmers offered a series of reforms to remedy the situation. With regard to economics, the Populists advocated a graduated income tax, government regulation of the railroads, and a return to bimetallism, which they believed would reduce economic inequality.²¹¹ Politically, Populists offered practical reforms—the secret ballot, the initiative and referendum, and electoral term limits—that aimed to restore American democracy, which was dominated by wealthy industrialists working in unison with the Republican Party. Yet, despite the People's Party's "hard" practical-minded reforms, Hofstadter claims that the Populists also had a "soft" side in their psyche. To Hofstadter, this "soft" side was apparent in

²⁰⁹ Monetary reform and the printing of Greenback dollars, popular during the Civil War, was the primary platform of the Greenback Party. Advocates hoped that the printing of Greenbacks would alleviate farmers' debt by putting more currency into circulation.

²¹⁰ Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (New York: Knopf Publishing, 1955).

²¹¹ Bimetallism refers to the economic policy in which gold and silver are both coined as national, legal tender. During the economic panic in 1873, federal legislation demonetized silver, and moved to the Gold Standard, an act that farmers decried as the "Crime of '73."

how the farmer portrayed himself, often in outlandish, conspiratorial rhetoric, as the victim of industrial society. As the “injured yeoman of agrarian myth,” the “backward-looking, [and] delusional” farmer was susceptible to xenophobic and anti-Semitic beliefs, which made him prone to accept that eastern American industrialists and British bankers intended to strip small farmers of their economic independence.²¹²

Two subsequent publications contest Hofstadter’s interpretation. First, Lawrence Goodwyn’s *The Populist Moment*, published in 1978, argues that Populism was the last great democratic movement in American history. Goodwyn places the origins of Populism in the Farmers’ Alliance organization that took root in Texas in the 1880s, and then spread throughout the South and the West. This historical interpretation minimizes the paranoid and delusional traits of the Populists, and places the blame for Populism’s downfall at the hands of a “shadow movement,” consisting of Free Silver advocates who promoted fusion with the Democrats.²¹³ A recent work by Charles Postel has further attempted to redeem the Populists’ reputation. Postel contends that Populism was not a nostalgic, backward-looking movement with the purpose to restore Jeffersonian agrarianism, but rather Populists were progressive modernists, who “sought renewal and reform in government, education, banks, and the community.”²¹⁴

Analysis of Populist masculinity is not a significant focus in any of these prominent historical works; however, an examination of gender discourse in the Populist movement reinforces these interpretations of Populism, and also helps to bridge some of the interpretative gaps between them. The Populists constructed a masculinity that was deeply rooted in an ideology of producerism, a concept that praised those who produced physical goods for a living and denigrated those who produced little of anything with physical value, such as bankers and land speculators. Populists also based their ideal of manhood on an archetype that historians

²¹² Postel, 6-7.

²¹³ Goodwyn, 125.

²¹⁴ Postel, 9-10.

define as the “Heroic Artisan,” an idealized masculinity that signified an independent small farmer, shop owner, or skilled craftsman. Using the Heroic Artisan as a model of Populist manhood supports Richard Hofstadter’s interpretation that Populists were retrogressive and backwards-looking men, unable to cope with the modern forces of industrial America. This traditional model of manhood dates back to Thomas Jefferson’s presidency, as he had once envisioned a nation of independent small farmers and artisans, bound together by the promise of democracy. Over the course of the nineteenth century, the market and industrial revolutions weakened the economic independence of artisans who were unable to compete against modern machines. Gilded Age contemporaries often commented on Populism’s retrogressive nature with regard to their nostalgia for the era of small farmers and artisans. For instance, Frederick Jackson Turner contended that Populists lived in a “primitive society” that could not possibly possess “intelligent appreciation of the complexity of business interests.”²¹⁵

Even though critics often represented Populists as men living in an age that had passed them by, Populists proffered modern solutions to the economic ills facing farmers. These agrarian radicals often explained their reforms within contemporary meanings of manhood, and not just within the model of the Heroic Artisan. Populists claimed that modern forces—namely the Republican Party, bankers, and railroad corporations—victimized farmers and threatened their manhood by denying hard-working producers the opportunity to fulfill their masculine role as familial breadwinners. In trying to rescue the farmer from economic anxiety, Populists embraced modern democratic reform, which they tried to legitimize with gender-based discourse concerning their expectations for manhood.

This chapter reconciles the two disparate portrayals of Populists as both retrogressive and as progressive by examining how they attempted to legitimize their political reforms through an

²¹⁵ Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (1893; repr. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920), 32.

ideology of manly producerism. Newspaper editorials, political speeches, and works of fiction reflect the importance that Populists placed on producerism and their own manhood.

Masculinity was a popular rhetorical tool in Gilded Age politics, and the ways in which Populists conceived of their manhood show how they can be interpreted both as harbingers of progressivism and as wounded men nostalgic for pre-industrial America. Many of their economic policies were indeed progressive, as later politicians implemented many of their plans to curtail the powers of the railroad and monopolistic business practices. Furthermore, the Populists attempted to forge a union with urban workingmen to create a party of “producers.” Producerism was a way to form a common bond between farmers and workingmen, and similar to the Haymarket martyrs, and the Knights of Labor, Populists used gender language and appeals to contemporary manhood as a means of promoting their reforms and legitimizing their politics. However, many of the Populists’ most famous speeches and documents, such as publications by the Farmers’ Alliance, the 1892 Omaha platform, Ignatius Donnelly’s novel *Caesar’s Column*, and William Jennings Bryan’s “Cross of Gold” speech, were framed within fears of male victimization that depicted a crisis in masculinity; hence, the Populists’ had a retrogressive desire to restore traditional expectations of manhood with the rejuvenation of the manly producer. Thus, the disparate historiographical interpretations of the People’s Party as both a retrogressive and a modernizing force can co-exist.

Populists encouraged masculine solidarity, rooted in the language of producerism, as they sought to establish a third political party that united northern urban workers with southern and western farmers. Populist producerism implied distinct gender connotations, especially in regards to masculinity, that were based off an understanding that “true” men work with their hands to produce physical goods, whereas white-collar bankers, lawyers, and speculators lack manhood because they exist solely off of producers’ labor. Tom Watson, a prominent Populist

from Georgia, especially positioned producerism as a masculine political force. He wrote, “Manhood will count for more than money, character will outweigh the dollar. The laborer, whether he work with brawn or brain, with thought or speech, will be the monarch of the new order of things.”²¹⁶ While the Populists eventually constructed a masculinity that emphasized their role as manly producers, they also made frequent allusions to the religious virtues of Populist politicians. They positioned their party as the salvation of traditional American manhood and claimed they would regenerate the manhood of producers, victimized by corporations.

The Populists’ use of contemporary and socially accepted meanings of manhood to back their political reforms faced considerable obstacles. The Republicans and Democrats provided stern opposition, in the West and South respectively, to the growth of the People’s Party. The two dominant parties used gender discourse to stigmatize the Populists as unintelligent hayseeds in order to prevent the third-party movement from gaining support among the electorate.²¹⁷ In addition, the People’s Party struggled to broaden their base and gain the support of northern workers, despite appeals to a common understanding of producerist manhood

These obstacles stemmed from the movement’s rural origins. Historian Lawrence Goodwyn credits the Farmers’ Alliance, established in 1874 in Lampasas County, Texas at J.R. Allen’s farm, as being the immediate forerunner to Populism. The alliance had the objective of educating farmers on alternatives to the crop lien system, which had kept southern farmers in continual cycles of debt. During the first 5 years of its existence, the Farmers’ Alliance

²¹⁶ Norman Pollack, ed., *The Populist Mind* (Indianapolis, The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1967), 203.

²¹⁷ There are many aspects to Populism that are unable to be covered within one chapter. Most notably, the role of women and African-Americans in regards to gender roles is something that will not be discussed at length in this chapter. Historians have extensively covered gender and race roles and how they pertain to a white manhood that coalesced during the era of Populism. For more information on these subjects consult: Michael Lewis Goldberg, *An Army of Women: Gender and Politics in Gilded Age Kansas* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000); Joel Williamson, *A Rage for Order: Black-White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Stephen Kantrowitz, *Ben Tillman and the Reconstruction of White Supremacy* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

experienced difficulty in recruiting members. The direction of the organization began to improve in 1883 after a talented speaker, S.O. Daws, whom Goodwyn calls the “first populist,” was tasked as the organization’s “Traveling Lecturer.” Daws, assisted by one of his appointees William Lamb, began to form sub-alliances, which expanded the scope and constituency of the alliance. The Alliance arrived in a second state, Louisiana, in 1887, and by 1890, delegates came to the national convention from 27 states, mostly from the South and Midwest. The Alliance grew rapidly and fostered a democratic culture that Goodwyn claims was based on four foundations: the Alliance recruiting men to farmers’ cooperatives, an economic theory similar to that of the Greenback Party, practical solutions for the economic plights of farmers, and political symbols and institutions that introduced the movement to the electorate.²¹⁸

Alliancemen infused the movement with beliefs in fraternalism and solidarity in order to recruit men into the organization. In that respect, the Farmers’ Alliance resembled other fraternal orders of the Gilded Age, as it brought its members together with rituals and sentiments of fraternity. The ritual of the National Farmers’ Alliance stated, “We constitute a common brotherhood, bound together for our collective and individual benefit. Our aims are high and our purposes noble. We aim to elevate man by blending together more intimately the ties of brotherhood and humanity in his social life, thus dissolving prejudice and selfishness in the sunlight of human love.”²¹⁹ The desire for homosocial interaction among farmers was evident in the ritual, as it acknowledged, “We are allied together to render the lives of farmers and laborers more attractive, country life less lonely and more social.” However, the main purpose of the

²¹⁸ Goodwyn, 25-34; Peter H. Argersinger, “Road to a Republican Waterloo: The Farmers’ Alliance and the Election of 1890 in Kansas,” *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 33, No. 4 (Winter 1967): 443-469.

²¹⁹ *National Farmers’ Alliance and Industrial Union Ritual* (Washington D.C.: The National Economist Publishing Co., 1890), 7.

Farmers' Alliance was not solely to fill a fraternal need, but to better the financial condition of farmers.²²⁰

While farmers in Texas fomented an agrarian movement culture, it was a group of Kansans who ignited the political ambitions of the Farmers' Alliance. The origins of the People's Party began with the Vincent brothers, Henry and Leopold, who supported a wide array of reform organizations, such as the Knights of Labor, the Greenback Party, and the Farmers' Alliance, in their radical newspaper, *The American Non-Conformist*. The Vincent brothers' journey to Kansas began with their father, James Vincent, an abolitionist who settled in Tabor, Iowa where he established a newspaper that his sons would eventually take over. The small newspaper moved from Tabor to Winfield, Kansas, in 1886, where it built a national audience of sixteen hundred people.²²¹ As political activists, the Vincents established the Union-Labor Party in Kansas, which essentially consisted of the Greenback Party platform. The Union-Labor platform praised producerism, while condemning the current state of male workers who were "suffering from poverty...and sinking into greater and greater dependence."²²² Their platform included planks to reform taxation on land and property, to issue currency directly to the people, and to aid workers by forcing business leaders to recognize labor organizations and unions.

In order to organize the Union-Labor Party for victory in the Election of 1888, the Vincent brothers not only used the *Non-Conformist* as their main ideological organ, but they also established a fraternal organization that they called the National Order of the Videttes. The Videttes, as Vincent explained, was merely a political auxiliary to the Union-Labor Party. The order's purpose was to organize party members and keep associates from fusing with Republican

²²⁰ *National Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union Ritual* (Washington D.C.: The National Economist Publishing Co., 1890), 8.

²²¹ Richard Piehler, *Henry Vincent: A Case Study in Political Deviancy* (Thesis: University of Kansas, 1975), 102-105.

²²² The platform was printed in most issues of *The American Non-Conformist*. The particular edition used here was published on March 31, 1887.

or Democratic competitors. There was nothing particularly revolutionary about the Videttes, and they did not preach anarchism, which was an especially sensitive issue in the wake of the Haymarket bombing in Chicago. Yet, the Videttes' "Declaration of Purpose," as printed in their ritual book, read much like the ideology of urban radicals:

The gulf which separates the capitalist from the laborer is rapidly enlarging; enormous fortunes on the one hand, idleness and absolute destitution on the other; capital secretly organized against labor on the one hand, labor secretly organized against capital on the other. These are facts of fearful and ominous import, and justify the organization of a secret order, to counter-balance the evils threatening on either hand, and to restore and keep for the people equal rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.²²³

The generic slogan for their Order was "liberty, equality, and fraternity," the same slogan used during the revolution in France, and the same motto that Parsons had adopted for the anarchist movement in Chicago. Members of the Order called "comrades" and "sentinels" were posted at the doors of the meetings to maintain secrecy. Military titles, such as Lieutenant, General, and Supreme Grand Sentinel, were given to high-ranking members. All of the members vowed oaths of secrecy and violators faced expulsion.²²⁴ Similar to countless other fraternal organizations of the Gilded Age, the Vincents merely sought to bind men together with a common brotherly identity, as well as unite the group for political purposes. Their ritual showed this as it stated, "We wish a thousand men to act as one; ten thousand hands to strike together in the advancement of Liberty."²²⁵ Furthermore, their ritual also foreshadowed the rhetoric of victimized manhood that became so commonly used by Populists.

In its short existence and despite backing from the Vincent brothers, the Union-Labor Party received less than 12% of the vote in the 1888 elections and failed to pose a serious threat to Republican dominance in Kansas. Part of the reason for the poor performance was an

²²³ "Anarchists," *Winfield Courier*, October 4, 1888.

²²⁴ "Anarchists," *Winfield Courier*, October 4, 1888.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

explosion in Coffeyville, Kansas, which the Republican Party effectively blamed on the Vincents. Kansas Republicans stigmatized the Order of Videttes as an anarchistic group that sought to “right social wrongs under a bloody and brutal oath.” The Republicans’ “proof” of the Videttes’ anarchism came after Ed Greer, the editor of a Republican newspaper, *The Winfield Courier*, printed an expose of the Order of Videttes, which included the order’s secret ritual. After a bomb accidentally exploded in the home of a railroad agent, Republicans proclaimed that the Videttes had intended to detonate a bomb in the *Courier*’s office as revenge for his expose. Greer retaliated by condemning the manhood of his political opposition. He claimed, “No man who loves his country—who favors fair, manly, and open discussion” would join a group like the Order of Videttes.²²⁶ These events, which took place in October 1888, hastened the collapse of the Union-Labor Party, but ultimately led to the formation of the Kansas People’s Party. After the electoral defeat of their Union-Labor Party candidates in 1888, the Vincents sent their youngest brother Cuthbert to Texas to be initiated as a member of the Farmers’ Alliance so that the organization could spread north into Kansas. The Vincents printed the Farmers’ Alliance platform in their newspaper, and hosted political speeches and rallies, including a lecture tour by a *Non-Conformist* employee, Mary Elizabeth Lease, in order to recruit farmers into the organization. By 1890, an estimated 100,000 farmers had joined the alliance in Kansas, and the organization served as the backbone for the foundation of the Kansas People’s Party. In its first election cycle, the Kansas People’s Party experienced great success as ninety-one house candidates, five U.S. congressmen, and one U.S. Senator, were elected. Within two years, the national People’s Party congregated in Omaha to announce its platform and arrival as the nation’s third major political party.²²⁷

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Argersinger, 465-467.

In establishing a movement culture that ultimately spread into politics, the intellectual leaders of Populism realized that their first arduous task involved the dissemination of their ideology to a receptive audience. Harry Tracy, a Farmers' Alliance lecturer, stated, "The great trouble with the farmers is they cultivate their muscles too much and their brains too little . . . no ignorant people have ever been found in any other condition than slavery."²²⁸ In acknowledging the contemporary stigma of farmers as muscular and hardworking, but also feeble of mind, Alliancemen set out to educate farmers through newspapers, books, political speeches, and lecture tours. Alliance and Populist publications show that they intended to educate and recruit by making appeals to producers through gender-based discourse. Agrarian radicals exalted their own manly virtues, while viciously attacking modern capitalist society as the victimizer of producers' manhood. The ritual of the Farmers' Alliance illuminates the goal of educating common farmers and laborers about their plight and how to improve their social and economic situations. Their ritual stated,

We aim, by cultivating the mind, to reach a higher degree of intelligence, thereby adding to the pleasures and relieving the cares and anxieties of life. Man had a mental and moral as well as a physical existence, and both should be equally and fully developed to afford him the greatest degree of enjoyment on this earthly sphere.²²⁹

Showing perhaps anxieties about their own intellectual shortcomings, the Farmers' Alliance wanted to fill the role as educator for common men.

Another way that the Farmers' Alliance disseminated its producerist ideology was through the publication of collections of songs, which men sang at fraternal meetings. Songs, with titles such as "Work With a Will," "A Song for Labor," and "A Man's a Man for All That," praised the producer. In "A Song for Labor," the lyrics read "Whom shall we call our heroes? To whom our praises sing? The pampered child of fortune? The titled lord or king? They live by

²²⁸ *National Economist*, May 18, 1889; quoted in Postel, 66.

²²⁹ *National Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union Ritual* (Washington D.C.: The National Economist Publishing Co., 1890), 7-8.

other's labor, Take all and nothing give; The noblest types of manhood, Are they who work to live. Then honor to our workmen, Our hardy Sons of toil; The heroes of the workshop, And monarchs of the soil."²³⁰ Not only were producers exalted, but the physical act of laboring was also commended, as the song "Work With a Will" reveals. The lyrics read: "Labor makes happiness, pleasure and health; Idleness never brings plenty or wealth; Life is at best but a rugged ascent, climb it with vigor, you'll never repent."²³¹ A final theme evident in Alliance songs is that they praised virtuous men, or men who stayed sober, industrious, and faithful. Songs, such as "Don't Go Out Tonight, My Darling: *A faithful wife's pleadings to her drunken husband*," encouraged farmers to be moral and upright fathers and husbands.

In this manner, the Alliance educated, defined and spread the word about its producerist ideology, all the while glorifying the farmer's role in America. In Nelson A. Dunning's official history of the Farmers' Alliance, he set forth this purpose of educating farmers by explaining producerism. Dunning wrote in his preface, "This book is written to make men and women better; to teach them their duties as citizens; to inculcate brotherly love . . . [and] to increase the power of education."²³² In defining producerism, Dunning quoted Emerson, stating, "The glory of the farmer is that, in the division of labors, it is his part to create. All trade rests at last on his primitive activity. He stands close to Nature; he obtains from the earth the bread and the meat. The food which was not he causes to be." Essentially, he confirmed the farmer's role as producer and the backbone of modern society, who feeds others with his labor. However, as a selfless man, the farmer "creates for others, with but a feeble voice . . . Willing as he is to create, and anxious to serve all other classes with the fruits of his industry and skill, yet the farmer has learned, by sad experience, that his toil has gone unrequited, and his anxiety had been construed

²³⁰ *The Western Rural Rules of Order and Rallying Song Book* (Chicago: Western Rural, 1882). 71.

²³¹ *The Western Rural Rules of Order and Rallying Song Book* (Chicago: Western Rural, 1882). 43.

²³² Nelson A. Dunning, *The Farmers' Alliance History and Agricultural Digest* (Washington, D.C.: The Alliance Publishing Company, 1891), iii.

into servility.”²³³ In his definition of producerism, Dunning not only examined the significance of the farmer’s occupation, but he also pointed to the anxiety felt by the farmer imperiled by financial crisis. In Dunning’s view, while farmers should represent an ideal construction of industrious and selfless manhood, they actually had become victims because the forces of monopoly and capital stripped farmers of their financial independence and manhood.

Throughout Populist publications and speeches, the theme of victimized manhood remained a consistent and integral part of how they viewed themselves. Within this portrayal of the farmer-as-victim, the Populists admonished Republicans, who had created their own self-image of defenders of the home and family values. Instead, Populists claimed that corporate monopolies and corrupt party politics of the Gilded Age had degraded manhood and caused men to revert to a primitive state. The Alliance ritual urged men to aid each other to avoid becoming a victimized male as it stated, “Our purpose is to exert an influence in opposition to the glaring and shameful vices which degrade mankind, lower him in the scale of human existence and bring despair and woe to the dearest creatures he has on earth.”²³⁴ Milford Howard, a Populist congressman from Alabama, especially spoke on the belief of a masculinity crisis that stemmed from monopolistic conditions. In *The American Plutocracy*, Howard wrote of men victimized by John D. Rockefeller’s business practices and sympathized with workingmen whom the industrialist “has driven to suicide, the wretched creatures he has hounded into insane asylums, the women who have been forced into poverty the most abject, the children whom he has stripped of clothing, deprived of food and turned barefoot into the street.”²³⁵ In a similar vein, the *Platte County Argus*, a Populist newspaper, reprimanded party politics, stating, “Politics can make this country to bloom and blossom like the rose . . . or it can stagnate every kind of

²³³ Dunning, 5.

²³⁴ *National Farmers’ Alliance and Industrial Union Ritual* (Washington D.C.: The National Economist Publishing Co., 1890), 8.

²³⁵ Milford W. Howard, *The American Plutocracy* (New York: Holland Publishing Company, 1895). Excerpts reprinted in Norman Pollack, ed., *The Populist Mind* (Indianapolis, The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1967), 235.

enterprise, reduce the masses to want and misery, and cause our people to become restless, desperate and blood-thirsty.”²³⁶

The thematic use of the victimized producer was featured in one of the Populists’ most famous documents: the People’s Party platform from the Omaha Convention in 1892. Written by Ignatius Donnelly, a Minnesota political journeyman who rose to fame as the author of *Atlantis and Caesar’s Column*, the preamble to the platform presents a crisis in masculinity amongst farmers and laborers. With apocalyptic imagery, Donnelly suggested that the crisis, brought on by dire political and economic conditions, provided an ominous foreboding for the country’s direction. The preamble begins:

We meet in the midst of a nation brought to the verge of moral, political, and material ruin. Corruption dominates the ballot-box, the Legislatures, the Congress, and touches even the ermine of the bench. The people are demoralized; most of the States have been compelled to isolate the voters at the polling places to prevent universal intimidation and bribery. The newspapers are largely subsidized or muzzled, public opinion silenced, business prostrated, homes covered with mortgages, labor impoverished, and the land concentrating in the hands of capitalists. The urban workmen are denied the right to organize for self-protection, imported pauperized labor beats down their wages, a hireling standing army, unrecognized by our laws, is established to shoot them down, and they are rapidly degenerating into European conditions. The fruits of the toil of millions are boldly stolen to build up colossal fortunes for a few, unprecedented in the history of mankind; and the possessors of those, in turn, despise the republic and endanger liberty. From the same prolific womb of governmental injustice we breed the two great classes—tramps and millionaires.²³⁷

Reading the preamble through the lens of manhood, it becomes clear that Donnelly was lamenting the suffering, impoverishment, and prostration of the producer classes. As the few became wealthy off the labor of the many, Donnelly concluded that society was on the brink of “moral, political, and material ruin.” The gender implications of the Populist preamble are in tune with other Populist discourse in which the producers, and their patriarchal roles and

²³⁶ *Platte County Argus*, June 4, 1896; quoted in Pollack, *The Populist Mind*, 42.

²³⁷ Excerpts from the Omaha Platform of 1892 were taken from George Brown Tindall, ed., *A Populist Reader: Selections from the Works of American Populist Leaders* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1966), 90-91.

expectations, were degraded by modern social and economic conditions. The preamble bemoans that the dominant political parties “propose to sacrifice our homes, lives, and children on the altar of mammon; to destroy the multitude in order to secure corruption funds from the millionaires.”²³⁸ Donnelly positioned American men as the victims of an unjust economic situation, and the current political parties neglected common men. Thus, Donnelly proposed the need for a third-party to regenerate the manhood and restore the political autonomy of American producers.

Donnelly, a politician and bestselling author, infused Populism with themes of apocalypse and victimized manhood. Like many reformers of the Gilded Age, Donnelly started his political career as a Republican congressman during the Civil War. Eventually falling in line with the Radical Republicans, Donnelly became an advocate of African American rights, but amidst the economic panic of the 1870s, he abandoned the Republican Party. During this decade, he also became affiliated with Grangers and Greenbackers. He felt that the Grange emasculated itself by constantly bowing to Republican pressure, and he aspired to “make the Grange great, powerful, and aggressive.”²³⁹ After failing in his objectives of increasing the political clout of the Grange in Minnesota, he momentarily gave up his greater political ambitions in order to become a writer.

Donnelly’s early works of literature contained scientific themes, but learned scholars generally considered Donnelly’s writings to have little, if any, scientific validity. His first book *Atlantis: The Antediluvian World* attempted to prove the existence of the fabled city, which he believed to be a beacon of civilization. Despite its outlandish scientific conclusions, the book sold quite well. However, critics, as well as the general population, were even less convinced by his follow up book, *Ragnarok: The Age of Fire and Gravel*. In the book, he claimed that divine

²³⁸ Tindall, 91-92.

²³⁹ Martin Ridge, *Ignatius Donnelly: The Portrait of a Politician* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962), 167.

powers planned to send a comet to Earth to judge a sinful and wicked world. Although the book failed to become as popular as his other works, *Ragnarok* provides insight into the emerging shape of Donnelly's apocalyptic fascinations. Basically, the Minnesotan asserted that judgment day loomed because industrialists held an "unexpressed belief that heaven is only a larger Wall Street, where the millionaires occupy the front benches, while those who never had a bank account on earth sing in the chorus."²⁴⁰ To save society from its excesses and God's judgment, he implored Americans to reject materialistic luxuries, and urged the people to renew their spirituality and their manhood through hard work and daily labor. He explained, "Matter is not everything" and he encouraged Americans to "establish spiritual relations . . . take your mind off your bricks and mortar, and put out your tentacles toward the great spiritual world around you . . . Widen your heart. Put your intellect to work to readjust the values of labor . . . that plenty and happiness, light and hope, may dwell in every heart."²⁴¹ With this critique on materialism, Donnelly's spiritual crusade compelled men to renew the virtues of the Christian Gentleman, and to rebuke earthly gain and the vices that accompanied capitalistic luxury.

Though it was not a critical or commercial success, *Ragnarok* provides a crucial glimpse into Donnelly's ideological evolution, ultimately resulting in his most popular work, the dystopian novel, *Caesar's Column*. First published in 1890—under the pseudonym Edmund Boisgilbert—the book sold over 230,000 copies in America by the end of the decade. Donnelly used the success of *Caesar's Column* to his advantage. The popular work provided him with the credentials he needed to become one of the most prominent members of the Populist Party. As a result, the convention delegates selected Donnelly to draft the Omaha Platform.

Donnelly's novel served an important didactic role for the Populist Party; its themes of apocalypse and the degradation of traditional manhood were directly imported into the Omaha

²⁴⁰ Ignatius Donnelly, *Ragnarok: The Age of Fire and Gravel* (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1883), 440.

²⁴¹ Donnelly, *Ragnarok*, 441.

Platform. Similar to other Alliancemen, Donnelly was fulfilling his role as educator to the masses. His various publications established expectations of manhood and outlined the threats that modern society posed to traditional masculinity. He refers to these purposes in his brief preface to the book, which he addresses to the public. He wrote, “I plead for higher and nobler thoughts in the souls of men; for wider love and ampler charity in their hearts; for a renewal of the bond of brotherhood between the classes; for a reign of justice on earth that shall obliterate the cruel hates and passions which now divide the world.”²⁴² Donnelly’s preface emphatically introduced Donnelly’s main theme of showing the negative impact that will beset a world that cannot fix the volatile relationship between capital and labor.

The novel’s significance rests in its pessimism, and Donnelly’s dystopian world predicts the fall of democratic principles, reveals Populist anxiety regarding their diminishing manhood, and shows a glaring disregard for urban workers, despite the fact that the People’s Party intended to unite urban and rural producers. The book is set one hundred years in the future. In this society, there have been great advancements in technology, but the masses are controlled by a wealthy oligarchy. Gabriel Weltstein, a native of Uganda, narrates the events of the novel through a series of letters that he sends to his brother. Gabriel has arrived in New York and initially marvels at its technological achievements. Airships, powered by the aurora borealis, fly above huge skyscrapers, large sheets of glass cover city streets, and pollution-less trains operate below the earth. Gabriel’s initial awe of the city culminates when he sees the splendor of *The Darwin*, a hotel where the city’s richest and most prominent citizens gather. The narrator realizes that for all its great scientific achievements, society has formed into two distinct socio-economic castes, and violent confrontation between the rich and poor appears inevitable. Over the course of the story, Gabriel becomes involved with a secret underground organization, The

²⁴² Ignatius Donnelly, *Caesar’s Column: A Story of the Twentieth Century* (1890; repr. Bibliobazaar, 2006), 12-13.

Brotherhood of Destruction, which plots to overthrow the Oligarchy, or the few wealthy monopolists who control society.

Throughout the course of the novel, Donnelly's consistent theme in regards to masculinity is one of degradation. Gabriel is the only male character who consistently upholds proper masculine behavior. He is virtuous, compassionate, and rational, and he has a strong belief in chivalry, evidenced by his protection of several female characters, including Estelle Washington, a descendant of the first president's brother, whom he eventually marries. He is independent and unafraid to speak his mind; he criticizes the monopolists for their plan to murder millions of insurrectionists, and he argues with a minister about the faulty tenets of a church that exists only to support the wealthy elites. His outspoken nature constantly gets him into trouble, and he narrowly escapes being killed by an assassin hired by Prince Cabano, a wealthy member of the Oligarchy.

Though Gabriel provides the moral and conscientious foundation of the book, the rest of the male characters are presented as lacking manhood. The wealthy Oligarchy consists of men who are "large, coarse, corpulent men; red-faced, brutal, decorated with vulgar taste; loud-voiced, selfish, self-assertive; cringing sycophants to all above them, slave-drivers of all below them."²⁴³ In a stereotype that was consistent with Gilded Age criticisms, the wealthy elites of twentieth century New York are shown to be luxury-loving, vice-ridden, and morally bankrupt men who exploit others and concoct schemes to control society and its wealth. According to Gabriel, cunning intelligence was the common attribute shared by members of the Oligarchy, and it was this trait that allowed them to monopolize society's finances and politics. In the hotel *Darwin*—a satirical allusion employed by Donnelly concerning the popular social theory of "survival of the fittest"—the wealthy women gave looks that were "bold, penetrating, immodest

²⁴³ Donnelly, *Caesar's Column*, 110.

. . . almost to fierceness: they challenged you; they invited you; they held intercourse with your soul.” Meanwhile, Gabriel describes “the chief features” of the men as “incredulity, unbelief, cunning, observation, [and] heartlessness.” In this world of the wealthy and privileged, not one “man would sacrifice himself for another,” and it is a society that thrives on the survival of the fittest.²⁴⁴ Among the Oligarchy, Prince Cabano receives the most prominent attention, and he personifies passionate manhood, as he is aggressive, competitive, and cruel. Cabano has established a harem of women, including Estelle, and he uses his money and power to bribe newspapers, politicians, and army generals to bend to his corrupt will.

Somewhat surprisingly, Donnelly depicts the working masses as equally brutish. Whereas the wealthy have opulent lifestyles and are vicious in their treatment of common men, the working masses are primitive and animalistic. In vivid language, Donnelly depicts the degradation of the working class as they had devolved over the course of the past century. This is a future where the streets are “foul, gloomy, [and] overcrowded,” and among the workers there are “no laughing and loving faces . . . they snatch bites out of their hard, dark bread, like wild animals, and devour it ravenously.”²⁴⁵ Living amongst the workers are the hated Chinese workers, who Donnelly portray as “wretched, yellow, under-fed coolies, with women’s garments over their effeminate limbs.”²⁴⁶ Thus, both the rich and the poor are lacking in masculine virtues; they have become products of the brutish environment that they cohabitate.

Finally, Donnelly depicts the leaders of the Brotherhood of Destruction, not as masculine role models or liberty-loving freedom fighters as one might expect, but also as wild, atavistic beasts. The President of the Brotherhood is Caesar Lomellini, a half-Italian, half-negro fanatic. Donnelly describes him as being “of immense size, considerable ability, and the most undaunted

²⁴⁴ Donnelly, *Caesar’s Column*, 21-22.

²⁴⁵ Donnelly, *Caesar’s Column*, 42.

²⁴⁶ Donnelly, *Caesar’s Column*, 92.

courage . . . [he was] muscular . . . [with the] eyes of a wild beast.”²⁴⁷ He had once been a peaceful farmer living in the State of Jefferson, but he became radicalized after money-lenders took his farm, enslaved him, and seduced his daughter. Ultimately, Donnelly describes Lomellini as the stereotypical anarchist, a dangerous and barbaric foreigner who was a product of the calamity and inequality of modern, industrial society. The second-in-command, named the “Russian Jew,” is the “brains” of the organization, and Donnelly applies stereotypes of the degenerate Jew to this character. The Russian Jew has a “crooked neck,” and he is a “cripple,” with “unclean, finger-nails [that] were black with dirt . . . [He has a] face mean and sinister, two fangs alone remained in his mouth.”²⁴⁸ With these two characterizations, Donnelly neglects to elicit sympathy for the leadership of The Brotherhood of Destruction. Instead, he portrays them within the framework of common tropes that Americans held toward foreign radicals.

Arthur Phillips, a socialist and son of a “benevolent man of scholarly tastes, and something of a dreamer,” is the third and final member of the executive committee of the Brotherhood. In the novel, Phillips goes by the pseudonym, Maximillian Petion, and he is the most troubled and fleshed out character. Petion is Gabriel’s closest friend in New York, and their friendship had been established after Gabriel saved the radical from being run over by Prince Cabano’s carriage. Gabriel deduces that Petion has a “manliness and kindliness” to him, but also a “restless, wild look” in his eyes that betrays his better masculine qualities.²⁴⁹ Petion is the financier of the Brotherhood, and he is torn between wanting to fix society with socialism and wanting revenge against the Oligarchy. The socialist’s father was a former lawyer who was indicted by the ruling class on the charge of perjury and forgery, and sentenced to twenty years’ imprisonment. Even though Petion regrets having a personal vendetta, his desire for revenge impedes him from improving social and economic conditions.

²⁴⁷ Donnelly, *Caesar’s Column*, 116-17, 136.

²⁴⁸ Donnelly, *Caesar’s Column*, 118.

²⁴⁹ Donnelly, *Caesar’s Column*, 119, 36.

The novel's climax is apocalyptic in nature and few characters are spared from Donnelly's vicious imagination. After the Brotherhood of Destruction incites workers to overthrow the government, Prince Cabano and the Oligarchy arrange to drop poison bombs on the masses. Cabano's plan backfires when an army general sells out to the Brotherhood, which had offered the army officer a larger bribe. Instead of dropping poison on the revolutionaries, the unscrupulous general targets his own soldiers. With their main source of protection dead, the Oligarchy is overthrown. Caesar's insurgents begin to pillage the homes of the wealthy, and start to capture and execute government leaders. Cabano tries to flee the city, but is sighted by the mob. He nearly escapes, but a street peasant stops him by shooting him in the neck. While the cruel tyrant is in painful agony, he is only given his fatal blow after offering money to a brutish worker to end his suffering. After Caesar takes control of the city, he cares little for the working masses. He becomes a drunken, vengeful brute, and Donnelly describes the leader as a man covered in black soot, who looked like a "negro." Caesar "had been drinking . . . [and] a king-devil, come fresh out of hell could scarcely have looked more terrible."²⁵⁰ At the end of the first day of the revolution, hundreds of thousands lie dead in the city. Caesar commands his men to pile the dead up into a pyramid, pour cement over them, and erect a monument—Caesar's column—to memorialize the day that the Brotherhood slaughtered the Oligarchy.

The final days of the revolution continue to reveal Donnelly's cynical views concerning the future of the country. On the second day of the uprising, the farmers pour into the city, but they were no longer the "honest yeomanry," but materialistic and bloodthirsty peasants seeking revenge and goods. Petion regrets the blood that has been spilled in the revolution he had inspired, and he tries to create stability and order in the midst of chaos. However, Petion fails to convince Caesar to halt his brutal, drunken reign, and his optimism for a better world based on

²⁵⁰ Donnelly, *Caesar's Column*, 243.

socialism falls apart. Meanwhile, the Russian Jew leaves town in an airship with \$100 million, which infuriates the frenzied insurgents, who demand wealth and riches for themselves. While Max, Gabriel, and their wives are fleeing New York, a mob of drunken workers tries to kill them, but they are saved when the general sends an airship to save them. As the protagonists fly away over the ruins of the city below them, they spot Caesar's decapitated head on the end of a pole, showing that anarchy and disorder now overran the city. While New York is utterly destroyed by the insurrection, the revolution had also spread to Europe, which prompts Gabriel to lead the group to his home in Uganda. Upon their return to Africa, they seal off the only passable road into their village by building a huge, impenetrable wall, so that outside "civilization" cannot encroach upon their utopian garden. To end his morality tale, Donnelly explains that the survivors established a thriving agrarian society with a socialist government. Gabriel claims that the society's success was based on the idea that the "end of government should be—not cheap goods or cheap men, but happy families."²⁵¹

By ending the book with Gabriel and his allies' return to Africa where they created an agrarian utopia, Donnelly shows his preference for country over city, an emphasis that he made pronounced throughout the book. In one particular episode, Petion rescues a poor girl, Christina, from Prince Cabano's harem of women, and he buys a farm for the girl's family, believing that "these plain, good people would be so much happier in the country than the city." Petion asserts, "A city, after all, is only fit for temporary purposes—to see the play and the shops and the mob—and wear one's life out in nothingness." Donnelly condemns the overcrowded city "with its poverty, its misery, its sin, its injustice, its scramble for gold, its dark hates and terrible plots."²⁵² Through these passages, Donnelly shows the limitations of Populism in that many rural Americans, Donnelly included, held disdain for the city, which inhibited the People's

²⁵¹ Donnelly, *Caesar's Column*, 250, 258, 267, 274.

²⁵² Donnelly, *Caesar's Column*, 201, 210.

Party's goal to unite city and country and secure the votes of northern workingmen. Other Populists echoed a similar theme and claimed that city life emasculated men, lured them with debauchery and vice, and stripped them of their political independence by making them effeminate men dependent on party bosses and machines. Thomas Dixon, a Populist and author of *The Clansman*, claimed, "The city is destroying the character and manhood of the nation."²⁵³ As a result of Donnelly and many other Populists' pro-agrarian and anti-urban philosophies, a schism formed between farmers and workingmen. Samuel Gompers, head of the American Federation of Labor, neglected to support Populism because he believed that the agrarian movement was too radical and its rural interests did not correlate to the needs of urban workers. He urged AFL members to not vote for the Populist ticket, which provided a serious blow to the creation of a party of producers.²⁵⁴ Despite the efforts of some urban radicals, like Eugene Debs and Henry Demarest Lloyd, to form a coalition of producers, of farmers and workingmen, both men of city and country still held onto negative stereotypes of the other, making it hard for Populism to earn the support of northern workingmen.

Donnelly's final major theme of the novel, in which he imagines a futuristic dystopia ruled by an elitist cabal known as the Oligarchy, fits into wider Populist thought regarding the demise of democracy. Populists, especially in the American South, often likened conditions in America to that of feudal Europe as a point of comparison in order to describe the loss of democratic ideals in America. An Alabama Populist, Milford Howard, wrote, "The money aristocracy, intoxicated by power . . . has grown bold and arrogant in its demands, and asks that the toilers of the nation, those who work with brawn and brain, be made slaves to this libidinous

²⁵³ *The Caucasian*, April 20, 1893; quoted in Joe Creech, *Righteous Indignation: Religion and the Populist Revolution* (Urbana: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 31, 84.

²⁵⁴ Norman Pollack, *The Populist Response to Industrial America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 63-66.

plutocracy.”²⁵⁵ Tom Watson, a Georgia Populist, displayed similar beliefs, and argued that a new feudal system was being established. He derided “the millionaires . . . the men who pay the bills for stuffing ballot boxes, the men who dictate the class legislation on which they fatten, the men who are swiftly laying the foundation, in this country, for a more brutal and godless and rapacious nobility than ever rode, lance in rest, over the peasantry of Feudal Europe.”²⁵⁶

In using such discourse, the Populists were trying to not only establish their party as the righteous savior of American democracy in terms of European feudalism, but also position their masculinity within American historical traditions. Populists used the rhetorical devices of nineteenth century commoners, who affirmed their manhood based on their economic independence and political autonomy. In antebellum America, men often based their social and gender identity, in large part, on their political inclusion and individual liberties. The interrelation between masculinity and politics was further confirmed by the fact that neither women, nor the nearly four million African Americans in the institution of slavery had political power. Watson and Howard, two southern Populists, frequently made connections to antebellum notions of freedom and slavery, and described their diminishing manhood in terms of modern enslavement that resulted from common men losing political autonomy to corrupt political parties.

In this tradition, agrarian radicals used America’s democratic and revolutionary heritage as an integral part of how they constructed their masculinity. Since the Revolution, American men had embraced democracy and often proved their manhood through the political autonomy they possessed. These sentiments had been most pronounced in the Jacksonian Era of the 1820s and ‘30s, in which the frontier president represented the Heroic Artisans in their struggle against the U.S. Bank, an institution that Jackson believed was a symbol of European effeminacy and

²⁵⁵ Howard, *The American Plutocracy* in Norman Pollack, ed., *The Populist Mind* (Indianapolis, The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1967), 229.

²⁵⁶ *People Party’s Paper* (Atlanta), April 14, 1893; quoted in Pollack, *The Populist Mind*, 25.

overcivilization.²⁵⁷ Historian Michael Kimmel describes the Heroic Artisan as “independent, virtuous, and honest...loyal to his male comrades . . .he was an honest toiler, unafraid of hard work.” This archetype of masculinity was at its height in the antebellum period, in which “nine of every ten American men owned their own farm, shop, or small crafts workshop” and those who were wage laborers predominantly worked in shops with fewer than twenty employees. Yet in the aftermath of the Civil War, the Heroic Artisan had lost ground to the Self-Made Man archetype. The ideal of self-made manhood valued success in the modern industrial workplace, even if that success came at the expense of stripping laborers of their economic independence.²⁵⁸ Nelson A. Dunning’s official history of the Farmers’ Alliance organization provides an example of how Populists referenced American history in order to position their politics within a gender framework. In his work, he signifies the importance of the pioneer’s masculinity, stating, “These pioneer brethren were honest, earnest, and brave . . . they laid the foundation upon which the great superstructure [of the Alliance] has been built.”²⁵⁹ Drawing direct parallels between the early pioneers’ masculine qualities to the Farmers’ Alliance, Dunning legitimized the masculine qualities of his organization through historic nostalgia that hearkened back to the eras of expansion and settlement.

Since Populists were prone to display such nostalgia for America’s agrarian past, contemporaries and historians alike often view the Populists as a retrogressive movement of men who were unable to cope with modernity. Theodore Roosevelt, an up-and-coming politician in the 1890s, showed his perspective on the Populists’ backwardness when referred to them as “all the lunatics, all the idiots, all the knaves, all the cowards, and all the honest people who are slow-witted.”²⁶⁰ The most infamous assault against the Populists came from the pen of a Kansas

²⁵⁷ Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*, 2nd ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 23-24.

²⁵⁸ Kimmel, 16, 27-29.

²⁵⁹ Dunning, 18.

²⁶⁰ Michael Kazin, *A Godly Hero: The Life of William Jennings Bryan* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 105.

newspaper editor, William Allen White, in the article, “What’s the Matter with Kansas?” White quickly catapulted to national fame after he published his depiction of key Populist figures. He referred to one Populist leader in Kansas as a “mossback Jacksonian,” another as a “shabby, wild-eyed, rattle-brained fanatic,” and the rest as “ordinary clodhoppers . . . [and] gibbering idiots.” He concludes, “All the decent, self-respecting men” are leaving the state and that “there is absolutely nothing wrong with Kansas. ‘Every prospect pleases and only man is vile.’”²⁶¹ White’s editorial was consistent with prevailing stigmas of the late 1800s concerning Populists. Americans believed that these rural politicians were less educated and less intelligent than their urban contemporaries. Thus, both contemporaries and historians, like Hofstadter, often viewed Populism as a retrogressive force. They accused Populists as being nostalgic for pre-industrial society because these agrarian politicians were unable to cope with modern society due to their intellectual backwardness.

The election of Jerry Simpson, a Populist Senator from Kansas, reveals the contestation between Populists and Republicans concerning the retrogressive nature of Populism. Simpson was a popular target of the Republican Press, and he was “teemed with reckless characterization . . . as a clown, an ignoramus, a boor, and a rag-a-muffin.” Simpson retaliated by positioning himself as a common man of the people, and regarded his Republican opponent as an effete aristocrat. Simpson referred to him as “Prince Hall . . . of royal blood travels in his special car, his dainty person is gorgeously bedizened, his soft white hands are pretty things to look at, his tender feet are encased in fine silk hosiery . . . I can’t represent you in Congress with silk stockings—I can’t afford to wear ‘em.”²⁶² After Simpson gave this quote, Victor Murdock, a Republican editor of the *Wichita Eagle*, branded him with the nickname, “Sockless Jerry.” The Republican Press characterized Simpson as a “hayseed” who was so poor that he could not

²⁶¹ William Allen White, “What’s the Matter With Kansas” *The Emporia Gazette*, August 15, 1896.

²⁶² Annie L. Diggs, *The Story of Jerry Simpson* (Wichita, KS: Jane Simpson, Publisher, 1908), 108-109.

afford to buy socks. William Allen White played off the popular nickname and referred to the Senator as “Sockless Socrates” to further cement the image of Simpson as a hayseed and long-winded boor. However, “Sockless Jerry” manipulated this popular image of himself to his advantage. Upon arriving in Washington to take his Senate seat, Simpson announced, “I want to say that I do now wear socks, and I put them on after the defeat of Ingalls, which I believe was the beginning of an era that marked the time when the humblest people can wear socks.” Despite his good-natured barbs against his opposition, Simpson still appeared to be slightly insulted by the popular portrayal of him, as he lamented, “Just now I am unable to determine which has given me greater reputation, my feet or my head.”²⁶³

Republicans were well equipped in campaign strategies to combat Simpson’s, and other Populists’, discursive claims of their aristocratic effeminacy. In the 1870s and early 1880s, Mugwumps, a political faction within the Republican Party that supported civil service reform to clean up the spoils system, had threatened the party’s solidarity. The Stalwarts, the Republican Party faction that supported the spoils system, responded by denigrating the manhood of Mugwumps. The Stalwarts deemed the Mugwumps to be sexless hermaphrodites, or “the third sex,” as Sen. John Ingalls famously quipped. The political atmosphere of the Gilded Age dictated that participants must be “party men,” and Republicans contended that those who chose an independent course were not real men. Within this context, the Republicans had developed a stable of political terminology and insults to offset the Populists’ attack that Republicans lacked manly virtues.²⁶⁴

As third party candidates, Populists faced negative image construction from both Republicans and Democrats. Both of the major parties chastised the manliness of Populists and asserted that the rural politicians possessed drunken, violent, and primitive traits. In the August

²⁶³ *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, March 13, 1891.

²⁶⁴ Kevin P. Murphy, *Political Manhood: Red Bloods, Mollycoddles, and the Politics of Progressive Era Reform* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 31.

19, 1891 issue of *Puck*, a Democrat-leaning satire magazine, Kansas Populists William Alfred Peffer and Simpson are portrayed as savage Indians armed with long knives; the word “alliance” is engraved on the blade, further drawing connections to the farmers’ organization from which Populism emerged. In this cartoon, the two savage Populists had scalped Kansas Senator John J. Ingalls, and they intend to take the scalp of Republican financial guru John Sherman. As discussed in Chapter 2, radicals’ opponents often portrayed anarchists as skulking Indians with the objective of stigmatizing their manhood as simultaneously savage and cowardly. The *Puck* cartoon shows how this style of image construction was appropriated in order to depict the Populists as savage brutes.²⁶⁵ Another cartoon in *Puck* depicted Peffer and other Populists as primitive apes to cement an image of their brutish, regressive masculinity.²⁶⁶ Additionally, Populists often appeared drunk in political cartoons. A cartoon in *Judge* magazine, which favored the Republican Party, shows Grover Cleveland, Peffer, and Simpson staggering around drunk on “presidential mania rum.” The only cure for their malady, the cartoon explains, is “Judge’s Bichloride of Patriotism and Unselfishness Gold.”²⁶⁷ Taken in concert, Populism’s political and media opponents used stereotypical characterizations of the reformers in order to delegitimize their politics and prove them to unworthy of public service.

Additionally, through political cartoons and images, the mainstream press cultivated an image of the farmer as an ignorant “hayseed.” Kansas Representative William Alfred Peffer was a popular target for the media. Peffer’s exceptionally long beard contributed to this popular stigma, as a rhyme from *Puck* mocked, “From Bleeding Kansas’s wind-swept plains, where

²⁶⁵ “After His Scalp,” *Puck*, William Alfred Peffer Cartoon Scrapbook, Kansas State Historical Society, <http://www.kansasmemory.org> [accessed February, 20 2011].

²⁶⁶ “Through the Jungle,” *Puck*, William Alfred Peffer Cartoon Scrapbook, Kansas State Historical Society, <http://www.kansasmemory.org> [accessed February, 20 2011].

²⁶⁷ “The Political Bichloride of Gold” *Judge*, William Alfred Peffer Cartoon Scrapbook, Kansas State Historical Society, <http://www.kansasmemory.org> [accessed February, 20 2011].

whiskers takes the place of brains.”²⁶⁸ Populists were often drawn in tattered clothes in order to portray the “Farmers’ Alliance fools” as tramps and differentiate them from the average, masculine farmer. An 1891 cartoon from *Judge* illustrates this sentiment. The cartoon depicts Populists as beggars who wear shredded clothes and try to convince a manly farmer to join their organization. However, the farmer is flush in good economic fortune because of his willingness to work and has no use for the People’s Party.²⁶⁹ With its disparate constructions of manliness, this cartoon effectively casts the Farmers’ Alliance as not being truly representative of the farmer. Instead, it suggests that they represent the idle and lazy tramp who demands the coinage of silver because he lacks the masculine capability to work for a living. In another cartoon in *Judge* magazine, contemporary politicians were cast in the roles of circus performers. Peffer and Simpson are seen as tiny Liliputians, with Simpson effete wearing a dress, while the “strong man” McKinley robustly lifts heavy weights behind the tiny figures.²⁷⁰ These images powerfully played off existing masculine tropes and were not necessarily derogatory towards farmers. Instead, *Judge* and *Puck* portray farmers as men who practice noble lives of work and profitability, while showing the men of the People’s Party to be weak and effeminate tramps who deserve their poverty-stricken fate.

The war of words and images between Populists and their opponents was simply political posturing, but it occurred on a scale that all sides considered of utmost importance. Populists such as Ignatius Donnelly commonly used the theme of millennialism and apocalyptic destruction, which naturally included religious overtones. Casting themselves as the heroes in this epic battle for the salvation of America, Populists claimed a masculine identity of being the

²⁶⁸ “Puck’s Valentines for 1894,” *Puck*, William Alfred Peffer Cartoon Scrapbook, Kansas State Historical Society, <http://www.kansasmemory.org> [accessed February, 20 2011].

²⁶⁹ “The Foolish Appeals of the Political Tramps” *Judge*, William Alfred Peffer Cartoon Scrapbook, Kansas State Historical Society, <http://www.kansasmemory.org> [accessed February, 20 2011].

²⁷⁰ “Judge’s Political Dime Museum,” *Judge*, William Alfred Peffer Cartoon Scrapbook, Kansas State Historical Society, <http://www.kansasmemory.org> [accessed February, 20 2011].

protectors and breadwinners of the home. Through this political strategy, Populists were attempting to appropriate a similar political strategy used by the Republican Party since the end of the Civil War. Republicans generally nominated Civil War veterans for office, knowing that their manhood could not be questioned. Those who did not have a record of war service faced public ridicule, as Kansas Senator John J. Ingalls discovered when Mary Elizabeth Lease asserted that the Senator “never smelled gunpowder in all his cowardly life. His war record is confined to court marshaling a chicken thief.”²⁷¹ In addition to establishing their military service, GOP candidates positioned their political identities within the framework of the Christian Gentleman. Republicans frequently ran election campaigns from their front porches—where they distributed lemonade instead of alcohol—and accused Democrat candidates of lacking self-control and being intemperate. With this combination of masculine military service and moral fortitude, Republicans presented themselves as ideal men. Populists recognized that this was a strong political tactic, thus, they attempted to co-opt it for themselves. People’s Party candidates assailed the Republican Party and captains of industry as idle non-producers and exploitative destroyers of the home, while defining themselves as true Christian gentlemen.²⁷²

The Populists’ appropriation of respectable manhood is evident upon examination of the two candidates that the People’s Party nominated for the presidency in the 1890s: James B. Weaver, who was the Populists’ candidate for president in 1892, and William Jennings Bryan, who ran as the fusion candidate in 1896. Weaver, a former Greenbacker, epitomized the traditional Republican candidate. A former Union general, he had proven his manhood in the Civil War. As for his moral fortitude, Russell Conwell, a Baptist minister, attested that Weaver

²⁷¹ Orval G. Clanton, “Intolerant Populist?: The Disaffection of Mary Elizabeth Lease,” *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (Summer 1968): 190n.

²⁷² Rebecca Edwards, *Angels in the Machinery: Gender in American Party Politics from the Civil War to the Progressive Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 31-32.

was “thoroughly temperate, zealous in good works” and full of “Christian charities.”²⁷³ This description perfectly described the archetypal values of the Christian Gentleman, and Weaver’s war service shielded him from any accusations of effeminacy. In his book *A Call to Action*, Weaver urged Americans to regain control of their government from “pirate” corporations. The former general sympathized with American men who were victims in modern society, asserting, “The man and the family have been driven to the wall, the weak trampled under foot.”²⁷⁴ Furthermore, Weaver declared that the morals and virtues of the Republican Party had been corrupted. He claimed that the modern GOP candidate had traits of “physical courage,” but also “disregard of moral obligations . . . [and] stolid indifference to human suffering . . . His only restraint is his fear and even this enhances his cruelty.”²⁷⁵ As a third-party candidate, Weaver performed admirably; he earned 22 electoral votes and just over 8% of the popular vote in the 1892 election, which Democrat Grover Cleveland won.

Similarly, the candidate for the 1896 election, William Jennings Bryan, held especially staunch religious beliefs that defined his expectations of manliness. Known as “the Great Commoner” from Nebraska, he held many convictions typical among Christian gentlemen. He was a pious man who was educated by his mother until the age of 10. Since he was raised on the family farm, his father, who was a lawyer, demanded hard work of his son who was tasked with feeding the farm animals and chopping wood, chores that Bryan called “drudgery.” He was an active member of the Young Men’s Christian Association at Illinois College in Salem, which he later led as the local president in 1886. Furthermore, he was the son of a temperance activist and a prohibitionist who deplored the “liquor traffic,” though he was not above buying beers for voters while he drank soda water and campaigned in the saloons. A lifelong Presbyterian, he is

²⁷³ Russell H. Conwell, *Our Presidential Candidates and Political Compendium* (Newark, NJ: 1880), 98-99.

²⁷⁴ James Baird Weaver, *A Call to Action* (Des Moines: Iowa Printing Company, 1892); quoted in Pollack, *The Populist Mind*, 110, 147.

²⁷⁵ Weaver, 226-229.

most famous in history textbooks for his role as prosecutor in the Scopes Monkey trial, in which he upheld Tennessee state law concerning the unlawful act of teaching Darwin's theory of evolution in school. However, long before the Scopes trial, Bryan was an advocate of the Social Gospel, and he showed his commitment throughout his political life in trying to reform the ills of modern society by applying Christian values to social and economic institutions in America. Armed with beliefs of industry, temperance, and Christian morals, Bryan became a formidable candidate in the Election of 1896.²⁷⁶

Bryan's rise to the heights of political prominence can be attributed to the skills, especially in public speaking, that he perfected. In political campaigns of the Gilded Age, it was of utmost importance for a candidate to prove his manhood in order to claim victory. Newspaper editors ridiculed politicians with poor oratory skills, usually in masculine terms, by deeming them to be "Miss Nancys," "Jane Dandies," or "eunuchs." While listening to campaign speeches for the governor's race in 1884 in North Carolina, Woodrow Wilson expressed these prevailing attitudes when he recalled, "I had expected a good deal of him; but I received more than I had expected. In the first place he looked like a man, which is almost half the battle with a public speaker; in the second place, he had the voice of a man, full, round, and sonorous; and in the third place, he spoke the words of a man."²⁷⁷ Politics depended on public perception, and one needed to present himself as a man in Gilded Age politics, regardless of what political party they belonged to, as both sides regularly employed masculine rhetoric as a part of their political strategies. As a college student, Bryan had vigorously worked on perfecting his oratorical craft, and his speeches were filled with emotional appeals. His sentimentalist approach to public speaking allowed him to assume a Jacksonian identity as the representative of the common man.

²⁷⁶ Michael Kazin, *A Godly Hero: The Life of William Jennings Bryan* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 7, 9, 17, 26, 177.

²⁷⁷ Rebecca Edwards, 15; Eleanor Wilson McAdoo, ed., *The Priceless Gift: The Love Letters of Woodrow Wilson and Ellen Axson* (New York: McGraw-Hill Co., 1962), 75-76.

Bryan received thousands of fan letters from around the country; his wife estimated that at least 2,000 letters arrived per day during the campaign. By the late 1880s, Bryan was such an accomplished speaker that he was given a bevy of nicknames in addition to the “Great Commoner,” including “the Boy Orator of the Platte,” and “Bryan the Invincible.” He ran as a Democrat early in his political career, and his oratory talents won him a seat in the House of Representatives in 1890. The “Boy Orator” became notorious in the Midwest for his ability to win the commoners’ vote, and he positioned himself for a presidential run in 1896.²⁷⁸

The path that Bryan took towards that pivotal election was greatly affected by the “Free Silver movement.” Bryan, despite the fact that Republicans tended to portray him as a Populist and sometimes even an anarchist, was never truly a Populist, but he was the central figure who fused Free Silver Democrats with the People’s Party. While Populists sought many reforms to agricultural and railroad policy, they also wanted monetary reform and a return to bimetallism, in which U.S. currency would be backed by both gold and silver. Free Silver would allow the government to coin silver at a 16:1 ratio to gold, and its advocates claimed that silver coins would alleviate the debt of farmers by expanding the supply of money. Bryan’s advocacy for the coinage of silver began as he stepped into the House for his first term, and by 1892, Bryan was essentially running for re-election as a Free Silver Democrat. Lawrence Goodwyn argues that concentration on the silver issue by western Populists and Democrats initiated the downfall of Populism. Goodwyn called Free Silver a “shadow movement” that fractured the alliance between western Populists in favor of silver, and southern Populists who would receive few benefits from bimetallism.²⁷⁹ However, for many Americans, the issue of free silver seemed to be the cure for poverty and the antidote to monopoly. Not surprisingly, politicians used gender discourse in their praise and condemnation of both gold and silver.

²⁷⁸ Kazin, 25, 73.

²⁷⁹ Goodwyn, 263.

Depending on the source, both gold and silver took on masculine properties. For Republican financiers, gold indicated manliness, and nations that were strong, imperial, and masculine, such as England and Germany, used the gold standard. Proponents of the gold standard characterized silver as the currency of choice for effeminate nations and races, such as India, Mexico, and China. To GOP leaders, gold represented honor, duty, and strength, whereas, as historian Rebecca Edwards claimed, “silver advocates were cowards.”²⁸⁰ When Bryan gave a speech advocating for the coinage of silver, the *Chicago Tribune* responded that his “flowers of speech” had “pleased the galleries and the girls” and those who “fawn and flatter,” but had failed to convince the men of the audience of the viability of silver as currency.²⁸¹

One of the most famous Populist publications, *Coin's Financial School* by William H. Harvey, which sold an estimated one million copies after its publication in 1894, frequently showed gender-based representations of gold and silver. The main character of the book is a young boy, a financier named Young Coin, who, only 10 years old according to the author, is able to best the arguments of “middle-aged and old men” with his support of free silver. As historian Richard Hofstadter points out, in Coin's mind “silver . . . was held to be the money of the people. Gold . . . pampered and petted . . . was the money of the rich.”²⁸² According to Young Coin, financiers were “vampires,” and in regards to the gold standard, “submission to its first encroachments is followed by the fatal lethargy that destroys every noble ambition, and converts the people into cowardly poltroons and fawning sycophants, who hug their chains and lick the hand that smites them.” He concludes by writing “to hesitate is cowardly! Shall we wait while the cry of the helpless is heard on every hand? . . . This is a struggle for humanity. For our homes and firesides. For the purity and integrity of our government.”²⁸³ Harvey's discourse

²⁸⁰ Edwards, 153.

²⁸¹ “Bryan's Speech for Silver Monometallism,” *The Chicago Tribune*, August 18, 1893.

²⁸² Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), 266.

²⁸³ William Hope Harvey, *Coin's Financial School*, (Chicago: Coin's Publishing Company, 1894), 143-145.

clearly mirrors other Populist publications in that reformers faced apocalyptic consequences for themselves and their family, unless they implemented the policy of free silver.

The cartoons included within Harvey's pamphlet further illustrate the gender properties of gold and silver. In most of the cartoons, gold and advocates of the gold standard are constantly depicted as unmanly, vicious, lustful, and gluttonous. In one particular cartoon gold smiles wickedly as silver has been stabbed in the heart and assassinated by a pen, a reference to the "Crime of '73." In another cartoon, John Bull—the English icon that represented the gold standard—strangles female "prosperity," while muscular and manly "silver" is chained to a Roman-style column and unable to provide assistance.²⁸⁴ The use of such images continued in Harvey's sequel, subtitled "Up to Date," where one such cartoon compares the price of crops from 1873 to 1895, and the amount of wheat it would take to pay the president's salary. In 1873, the cartoon shows that 17,000 bushels of wheat would pay the salary, and both the farmer and the president look healthy. The president sits sturdy and upright, and the financially secure farmer wears respectable clothing. However, in the cartoon representing 1895, the president is obese, unhealthy, and rests on a vast pile of wheat bushels. Meanwhile, the farmer no longer looks respectable, but appears as a tramp wearing tattered clothes.²⁸⁵ In concert, the images and descriptions of gold representatives offered in *Coin's Financial School* challenged popular notions that Republicans, who supported the gold standard, possessed Christian virtue. Meanwhile, "manly silver" was depicted in several cartoons as enslaved, held down, or murdered by vicious, conspiratorial gold.

By 1896, the issue of free silver had come to dominate reform politics, pushing aside other issues in the Populist movement, including women's suffrage, railroad rate regulation, and the sub-treasury. Bryan stepped into this maelstrom and fashioned himself as a "godly hero."

²⁸⁴ Harvey, 19, 129.

²⁸⁵ William Hope Harvey, *Coin's Financial School Up to Date* (Chicago: Coin's Publishing Company, 1895), 84.

He positioned himself as a Christian Gentleman, and his talent for speaking assured his audience of his manliness. In the Spring of 1896, the Populists made a critical decision. They chose to wait until the national parties held their nominating conventions in the hopes that they could strengthen their position for a run at the presidency. During these critical months, Bryan gave numerous speeches at local Democratic conventions, trying to get the support of delegates for his nomination at the national convention. His supporters continually focused on his masculine presence, including his bellowing but harmonious oratory, his “stalwart, broad-shouldered presence,” and his youthful looks and muscular body that had been refined from years of hard work as a youth on his father’s farm.²⁸⁶ Political cartoons often positively depicted Bryan, as well as other Populist leaders, such as James Weaver, as a lion, the king of the animals, who roared loudly and heralded reform and social improvement for common men.²⁸⁷ Just as his supporters honed in on Bryan’s rugged agrarian masculinity, detractors drew him as a young boy, not yet a man, who was not fit and manly enough to occupy the most powerful position in the country.

With his popularity growing on the national stage, Bryan saved his best performance for the national Democratic convention, which was held in Chicago in early July 1896. Representatives from a multitude of political backgrounds, including Populists, socialists, women’s suffragists, and prohibitionists, attended the convention, which contributed to a circus-like atmosphere. Bryan and silver advocates beat out the “goldbugs,” including former President Grover Cleveland, for every major convention position. On July 9, Bryan emerged as the

²⁸⁶ Kazin, 48.

²⁸⁷ As an interesting side note, historians who contend that Frank Baum’s *The Wizard of Oz* is a political allegory about Populism generally argue that the cowardly lion was representative of Bryan. Whether or not this was Baum’s intention is debatable, but other characters in the novel reflect the political, as well as gender, issues of the era. For example, each of the male characters in the story are suffering from a masculinity crisis, such as the Scarecrow (representative of the farmer) who feels he is inadequate because he is unintelligent and needs a brain, the Tin Man (representative of the worker), who believes he has no heart, or sympathy, for others, and finally the lion (Bryan), who needs the courage to stand up to the eastern politicians (the wizard, Wicked Witch of the East). For more on the Populist allegory consult: Ranjit S. Dighe, ed., *The Historian’s Wizard of Oz: Reading L. Frank Baum’s Classic as a Political and Monetary Allegory* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002).

favorite to win the nomination. On that day, he gave his infamous “Cross of Gold” speech.

Bryan infused his speech with sentimentality, but also with expectations of manhood that were consistent with the People’s Party construction of its own masculine image. First, the speech had several allusions to producerist masculinity, and praised the labor of common workers. He spoke,

The man who is employed for wages is as much a businessman as his employer. The attorney in a country town is as much a businessman as the corporation counsel in a great metropolis. The merchant at the crossroads store is as much a businessman as the merchant of New York. The farmer who goes forth in the morning and toils all day, begins in the spring and toils all summer, and by the application of brain and muscle to the natural resources of this country creates wealth, is as much a businessman as the man who goes upon the Board of Trade and bets upon the price of grain. The miners who go 1,000 feet into the earth or climb 2,000 feet upon the cliffs and bring forth from their hiding places the precious metals to be poured in the channels of trade are as much businessmen as the few financial magnates who in a backroom corner the money of the world.²⁸⁸

Through this important passage, Bryan glorifies the work of the commoner as being true producers and businessmen. Similar to the type of rhetoric used by the Farmers’ Alliance, he glorified the manhood of farmers as descendents of the pioneers by using history as a reference point. He alluded to the “hardy pioneers who braved the dangers of the wilderness.” He sentimentally referred to the Democrats as the party of Jackson and Jefferson who “stood against the encroachments of aggregated wealth.” Finally, he praised the manly strength that resides in the common man, stating, “The humblest citizen in all the land when clad in the armor of a righteous cause is stronger than all the whole hosts of error.”²⁸⁹

Secondly, Bryan applied religious principles to the political task at hand. In the mold of Ignatius Donnelly, he cast the election into a millennial vision of good versus evil. He claimed that this particular political contest was “a cause as holy as the cause of liberty—the cause of

²⁸⁸ The famous speech known as “The Cross of Gold” speech has been reprinted and abridged many times. The quotes from the speech here come from, William Jennings Bryan, *The First Battle: A Story of the Campaign of 1896* (Chicago, 1896), 190-206.

²⁸⁹ Ibid, 190-206.

humanity,” and he framed the election as a holy battle for the future of America. Also, like other Populists, he placed his candidacy as a virtuous Christian Gentleman who strove to uphold decent standards of domesticity. He explained, “We are fighting in the defense of our homes, our families, and our posterity.”²⁹⁰

Finally, Bryan most famously used the vivid imagery of the victimized male, but with a twist. In the notorious finale of the speech, Bryan announced,

If they dare to come out in the open field and defend the gold standard as a good thing, we shall fight them to the uttermost, having behind us the producing masses of the nation and the world. Having behind us the commercial interests and the laboring interests and all the toiling masses, we shall answer their demands for a gold standard by saying to them, you shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns. You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold.²⁹¹

In reading this infamous passage as it pertains to masculinity, Bryan, through religious allegory, both references and rejects martyrdom. Similar to other Populist speeches, this was a decisive call to action. In using the Biblical allusion to Christ on the cross, Bryan referenced the most well-known example of male victimization and suffering in religious history, and related it to his advocacy for free silver. However, he proclaimed that no longer will the common man accept suffering and victimization, but he will fight for his cause as a manly producer against the money power. After this rousing conclusion, “everybody seemed to go mad,” according to the *New York World*. Some men cheered while others cried, and some men embraced, while others threw their hats in the air.²⁹² On the merits of this speech, Bryan won the Democratic nomination for President, which put Populists in the tricky position of deciding on whether to fuse with the Democrats and nominate Bryan, or choose their own third-party candidate. Save a few Populists from the South, the People’s Party chose the path of fusion.

²⁹⁰ Ibid, 190-206.

²⁹¹ Ibid, 190-206.

²⁹² Kazin, 61.

Bryan's ascendance to the top of the Democrat/People's Party ticket was a devastating blow to the agrarian movement that controlled the early years of Populism. Yet, it was practically necessary for the People's Party to nominate Bryan, which highlights the internal struggle of the Populism. In Kansas, a state where the Republican Party had traditionally dominated electoral politics, a fusion ticket emerged as early as 1892. In order to defeat Republicans, Populists and Democrats combined their efforts because, had they not fused, the Republicans would have carried the elections. Not all Kansans were in favor of fusing with the Democrats, especially Mary Elizabeth Lease. Due to the deaths of two brothers and a father during the Civil War, she harbored resentment towards Democrats, whom she blamed for the war. In the 1892 gubernatorial race, though he ran as a Populist, Lorenzo Lewelling received assistance from Democrats that swept him into office. Lease disparaged the governor, and she considered Lewelling to be a "weak man" without "backbone," because he had cooperated with Democrats to win the election.²⁹³

Similarly, in many southern states, most notably South Carolina, agrarian rebels faced a traditionally dominant political party. In this instance, South Carolina Populists, like Hendrix McClane, challenged the hegemony of the Democrat Party by trying to fuse their party with Republicans. McClane, like other Populists, believed that a united party could establish itself based on producerist manhood, and he encouraged white and African-American producers alike to join together. McClane had little success, however, because Benjamin Tillman, a wealthy Democrat and planter, seized control of the farmer's movement. Despite the intentions of the Farmers' Alliance to create a "race-neutral" organization—the Farmers' Alliance had established an auxiliary organization, the Colored Farmers' Alliance—Tillman had little sympathy for African Americans. Through a platform based on white supremacy, Tillman seized control of

²⁹³ Clanton, 195.

the Populist movement after he became the governor of South Carolina in 1890. He had no intention of pushing through the People's Party's agrarian and economic reforms.²⁹⁴ Yet, the farmers supported him because Populists had been advocates of a bi-racial coalition. The two examples in Kansas and South Carolina show that issues of race and gender remained of utmost importance, and when Populists conceded by fusing with subordinate political entities, it actually contributed to the downfall of Populism.

Additionally, Bryan's "Cross of Gold" speech indicated another major problem that Populists faced, which was how to gain urban support. The "Boy Orator" made explicit references to southern and western farmers and miners, as well as rural professionals, but he included no direct allusion to the urban worker, and it was almost a necessity to win that vote in order for Bryan to take the election. Bryan further aggrieved urbanites by eagerly showing his personal affection for farm over city, when he spoke, "I tell you that the great cities rest upon these broad and fertile prairies. Burn down your cities and leave our farms, and your cities will spring up again as if by magic. But destroy our farms and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in the country."²⁹⁵

Although Populism began in rural areas, by the 1890s it had attempted to infiltrate northern urban cities, though, northern workers were much less enthusiastic about the movement than the farmers. Reformers and radicals, such as Greenbackers, Nationalists—a movement that was inspired by Edward Bellamy's utopian novel *Looking Backward*—Henry George "single taxers," prohibitionists, and labor leaders and proponents, such as Eugene Debs and Henry Demarest Lloyd, all became prominent Populists. With such a broad, and often disjointed, foundation of support, the Populists sought to create unity, and develop a broad base of support by emphasizing the common bond that workers and farmers shared as manly producers.

²⁹⁴ Stephen Kantrowitz, "Ben Tillman and Hendrix McClane, Agrarian Rebels: White Manhood, 'The Farmers,' and the Limits of Southern Populism," *The Journal of Southern History* 66, no. 3 (Aug., 2000): 497-524.

²⁹⁵ Bryan, *The First Battle*, 190-206.

Eugene Debs was chief among the urban radicals who came to support Populism in the 1890s. As a youth growing up in Terre Haute, Indiana, Debs came to the understanding that a man's worth was proven by his role as a producer, as a patriarch, and as a reputable member of society who participated in civil and political affairs. For Debs, "true" manhood equated to having self-control over one's life along with an individual responsibility to one's community. According to Debs's biographer, Nick Salvatore, Debs's "model of manhood" was William Riley McKeen, a benevolent and paternalistic railroad tycoon. The son of hardworking French immigrants, Debs was ingrained with a producerist ethos, and he believed that an honest day's work deserved an honest day's wage, a point that McKeen emphasized as Debs's employer. In the 1880s, Debs opposed strikes, agreeing with his boss that they led to violence and anarchy. As a result, he did not support the Knights of Labor or the Haymarket anarchists in 1886. However, like other radicals of his generation, his conceptions and worldviews changed with age. The budding radical began to believe that the worker's role as a producer and a man was being diminished because of industrialization and mechanization. As a fellow railroad worker eloquently described, when men came to work in factories they "were looked upon on as nothing more than parts of the machinery that they work . . . [in the factories] a man lost his identity as a man."²⁹⁶

Debs, too, began to feel that industrialization devalued his manhood and individual responsibility to the community. The inability for producers to retain their traditional patriarchal roles in the modern factory exacerbated Debs's anxiety. Earlier as a youth, Debs had joined the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, which was a mutual aid association that provided death and insurance benefits. By the 1880s he had become the editor-in-chief of their monthly magazine, and his changing beliefs concerning manhood were reflected in the articles he wrote.

²⁹⁶ Nick Salvatore, *Eugene V. Debs: Citizen and Socialist* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 19 25, 47, 70.

Regardless, the young editor continued to resist forceful resistance and industrial disorder. In an 1885 editorial he wrote, titled “Art Thou a Man,” Debs showed his disdain for masculine aggression and physical confrontations, which he considered to be un-gentlemanly behaviors. Debs disagreed with the expectation that men should resort to violence when their manhood is challenged and he contended that a true man needs “something more than a superb development of muscle, prize-ring science and bulldog courage.” Yet, in this editorial, Debs also took issue with certain men, such as businessmen and financiers, who affirmed their manhood by pointing to the tithes they pay to the church. Debs claimed that this type of man “is a base hypocrite, a moral monstrosity, a social pestilence, a loathsome impostor...such characters are destitute of manly qualities . . . [and] they degrade human nature.”²⁹⁷ Debs concluded that a true man is one who “despises a lie, a prevarication and subterfuge. A man is true to wife and home . . . I do unto others as I would have them do unto me. . . I am governed by conscience and judgment . . . Then a man is found, a man honest and true, who knows his rights . . . He will be found with moral and physical courage, ready to resume the responsibility of his acts.”²⁹⁸ As evident in this editorial, the young man still believed in individual accountability and responsibility, praised the producer and patriarch, but he also included a scathing critique of hypocritical monopolists.

Debs’s evolution as a radical continued in the 1890s. In 1894, he led a boycott and strike by the American Railway Union against the Pullman Sleeping Car Company, which landed him a short stint in federal prison. Upon his release, he became a vocal supporter for the People’s Party in the Election of 1896. A Chicago Populist, Henry Demarest Lloyd, planned to nominate Debs as the People’s Party candidate for the presidency, but Debs refused to run at this time. Instead, the majority of the Populists decided on fusion and lent their support to the Democratic nominee, William Jennings Bryan. Despite efforts of men like Debs, Populism failed to gain

²⁹⁷ Eugene V. Debs, “Art Thou a Man,” *Locomotive Firemen’s Magazine* 9 (May 1885): 283.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 285.

traction in northern cities. However, the recruitment of Debs as a Populist and his conception of masculinity that closely mirrored that of rural Populists signified a key link that could potentially unite city and country into a party of producers through a common understanding of manhood. In the end, this link failed to materialize.

When the presidential election votes were tallied, the Democrat-Populist fusion ticket failed to receive a single electoral vote in the Northeast and Great Lakes regions. Though they swept the South and the West in electoral votes, they were unable to get the vote of urban workers. The central contradiction still existed in that, though, they tried to unite as producers against non-producers, agrarian and urban interests were inherently at odds. If the Populists won and enacted their platform of free silver, it would lead to inflation and a higher price of food, thus weakening the real income of urban workers. Likewise, if urban workers received higher wages or a shorter work-week, corporations would raise the price of mechanical reapers, freight rates, and other places that directly affected the profitability of the small farmer. Daniel DeLeon, a left-wing Socialist, perfectly expressed this distance between agrarian Populists and urban radicals. He argued, "Populist farmers are to get free silver at sixteen to one, so that they may pay their debts with depreciated money and thus become capitalists; the Populist politicians will get the spoils of office, while the Populist wage workers will mop their foreheads and rub their empty stomachs with a glittering generality."²⁹⁹ The economic motivations and incentives for urban workers could not be reconciled with the Populists' platform, especially after free silver became the primary objective.

Although Populists had fought for a meaning of manhood that combined economic producerism, religious virtues, nostalgic visions of American history, and a claim on their own victimization at the hands of industrial corporations, they were unable to unite geographic and

²⁹⁹ L. Glen Seretan, *Daniel DeLeon: The Odyssey of an American Marxist* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 112.

economic disparities into a coherent unity. It would be erroneous to state that reasons of masculinity account for why the Populists lost the fateful election of 1896, but their inability to resolve the economic paradox between urban workers and rural farmers was based on the hopes that a unified meaning of manhood could overcome economic realities. Yet in the end, the People's Party attempt to bridge the divide with producerist manhood fell short.

In the end, Bryan's effort in logging thousands of miles and giving hundreds of speeches was not enough to defeat William McKinley's well-organized campaign run by Mark Hanna, but it did lead to a crucial new era with regards to politics, as well as masculinity. Combining new and old methods of electioneering, Hanna raised over three million dollars, mostly from corporate donations, and put Republican speakers on the stump in northern states to advocate for the gold standard and tariffs. Meanwhile, McKinley campaigned from his front-porch in Ohio, a successful tactic used by Republican nominees before him. They referred to him as "Major McKinley" and they waved the bloody shirt, but this time with less direct connection to the sectionalism and betrayal of the Old South. Instead, the GOP encouraged men to take on a new aggressive and passionate manhood that combined defense of the home porch with defense of the country. For conservatives in the 1890s, the main crisis facing the nation came from industrial disorder, including strikers, money cranks, anarchists, and Populists, and politicians used these derisive labels interchangeably. Thus, at the conclusion of the election of 1896, the Republican Party was leaving behind its masculine role of the domestic, Christian Gentleman, and adopting one of passionate manhood that would be confirmed not just by the protection of the home, but by the conquering of new foreign markets.³⁰⁰ Republican men, who had become increasingly concerned with their alleged effeminacy and overcivilization from decades of challenges from working-class men, anarchists, and Populists, turned towards a Rooseveltian red-blooded

³⁰⁰ Edwards, 122.

masculinity that would be upheld in both the North and South by both the Democrat and Republican parties. Meanwhile, for radical reformers, new organizations were beginning to emerge that contested this new idealization of manhood through either criticism of aggressive masculine imperialism, most notably the Socialist Party, or through the adoption of an even-more aggressive manhood, which was especially present within the Industrial Workers of the World.

Ch. 4: Red-Blooded Manhood, Solidarity, and the Industrial Workers of the World

For the majority of the nineteenth century, American men upheld the gender ideals and expectations of Victorian manhood. Within this type of masculine construction, men were expected to be respectable, meaning they should be sober, industrious, and disciplined, and they should sacrificially delay their own personal gratification. Yet, over the final two decades of the nineteenth century, American men began to dwell more intently on their own manhood. They became especially concerned that their hardy masculine traits were diminishing in the modern era. As a result of the fears of overcivilization and effeteness, coupled with looming class and international conflicts, prominent Americans at the turn of the century began to conceptualize a new ideal of passionate, or red-blooded, manhood. Passionate manhood celebrated masculine traits, such as aggression, competition, and toughness that Victorians had considered the virtues of primitive men. For red-blooded men, as historian Anthony Rotundo states, “the body itself became a vital component of manhood: strength, appearance, and athletic skill mattered more than in previous centuries.”³⁰¹ Theodore Roosevelt, the most well known advocate of this new type of masculinity, actively called for a return to a more primitive man, though he argued this aggressiveness must be tempered, and not taken to excess. These promoters of this new type of red-blooded American man believed this ideal manhood could be achieved in a variety of manners, including: developing muscular strength in male bodies, returning to the frontier West, competing in sports, signing up for military service, and volunteering in youth-oriented organizations, such as the Boy Scouts of America and the Young Men’s Christian Association.

As expectations of this construction of masculinity grew to encompass the aspects of what Roosevelt deemed “the strenuous life,” they came to make a distinct impact on radicalism

³⁰¹ E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1993), 6.

in America. As shown in Chapters 1-3, radicals in the Gilded Age had generally promoted an ideal masculinity that was based on the Victorian gentleman, in which they upheld patriarchy, virtues of respectability, and a producerist ideology. Although radicals in the Progressive Era, including IWW members, often still held onto these manly expectations from the Gilded Age, they included more direct references to both their individual physical strength, and their strength in numbers. This was a stark contrast to most radical organizations in the Gilded Age, such as the Knights of Labor, who often muted their physical, working-class strength in favor of promoting their own respectability. Radicals of the Gilded Age had learned their lessons from the Haymarket trial; they did not desire to appear openly aggressive or as advocates of violent class warfare. Yet, by the Progressive Era, radicals, who understood the shifting contemporary expectations of manhood, no longer merely promoted respectability. Radicals, thus, began to give speeches and provide visual images that glorified their physical strength and praised their rugged, sometimes primitive, masculinity.

Among Progressive Era radical organizations, the Industrial Workers of the World especially disseminated cultural productions that emphasized muscular bodies and honored masculine values of strength and solidarity, which they tied into their aggressive tactic of direct action. Studies such as Peter Harwood Morse Jr.'s "Wobbly Identities: Race, Gender, and Radical Industrial Unionists in the United States, 1900-1920," have investigated the extent to which the IWW constructed a white male identity. Morse's dissertation provides thorough documentation of how often IWW men exhorted other workers to "be a man" or "act like men" by joining the IWW. Clearly, the frequent calls to manhood were infused with gender expectations that challenged workers to fall in line with the IWW's conception of masculinity. However, the relationship between how the IWW and American society at large held similar conceptions of idealized manhood in the Progressive Era merits further analysis. In defining the

type of masculinity that the IWW constructed, Morse concludes that their masculinity was constructed more on what they were not, as opposed to what they actually were. Morse claims that the establishment of an “other,” led the IWW to conceptualize its manhood in relation to scabs, police, capitalists, and soldiers.³⁰² While Morse is correct that the creation of an “other” helped to form the basis of their masculine identity, more attention needs to be paid to how the IWW constructed its identity of what it was, rather than it was not. As the meanings of manhood shifted towards passionate manhood, Wobblies positioned their union in line with these new values and expectations.

The IWW was part of a pattern in American history of 1870-1920 in which radical organizations attempted to appropriate normative concepts of masculinity congruent with the rest of American society as a means to legitimize their standing in the community. While the IWW’s construction of masculinity was markedly different from that of the Knights of Labor, the Populists, or the Haymarket anarchists—the IWW emphasized red-blooded, and physical manhood more than Victorian respectability—their concept of manhood was in tune with mainstream America’s shift towards idolizing red-blooded masculinity. However, just like previous radical groups, such as the Knights of Labor, which tried to construct an idealized manhood among its members that promoted respectable behavior reserved for Victorian, self-made capitalists, the IWW conceptualized their own masculinity in a manner in which its members were physically stronger and more rugged, more cooperative with their fellow comrades, and more humane than other virile men of the Progressive Era. In order to legitimize their organization and gain strength in membership among the working-class, the IWW, similar to the radicals of the Gilded Age, positioned workers as victims of capitalism. In combating

³⁰² Peter Harwood Morse Jr., *Wobbly Identities: Race, Gender, and Radical Industrial Unionists in the United States* (Ph.D. Dissertation: State University of New York at Binghamton, 2006); Francis Shor, “‘Virile Syndicalism’ in Comparative Perspective: A Gender Analysis of the IWW in the United States and Australia,” *International Labor and Working-Class History* 56 (Fall 1999): 65-77.

capitalism in their cultural discourse, the Wobblies constructed a masculinity that celebrated their physical ruggedness, while also establishing an “other,” often including capitalist leaders, whom they generally depicted as either overcivilized “parasites” or primitive and brutish beasts. At the same time, American citizens who rejected IWW unionism responded, often with violence, in order to delegitimize this new radical organization. Though Wobblies, in general, tried to practice non-violence, violence escalated between Wobblies and their opposition partly because Progressive Era men supported the ideals of red-blooded manliness. As a result, Wobblies suffered from union hall raids that intensified and resulted in lynchings, a castration, gunfights, and savage beatings. In the end, the Wobblies’ tactic of appropriating passionate manhood for their organization did not grant legitimacy or a long, substantive existence for the Industrial Workers of the World. This chapter will first establish the shifting expectations for masculinity as they developed in the Progressive Era in order to provide the historical context in which the IWW established their own idealized manhood. The remainder of the chapter will expand on how the IWW constructed its masculinity through organizational ideology—that is, how they used masculine propaganda as a cultural force to both recruit new members and earn legitimacy while participating in the general strike. Finally, the chapter will conclude by examining the escalation of violence that occurred during the period of World War I as a result of the ideals of passionate manhood becoming more firmly rooted in industrial society.

As a result of the twin forces of modernization and industrialization in the Gilded Age, several challenges emerged that threatened to uproot traditional understandings of masculinity. In this era, historians regularly contend, men experienced a crisis in masculinity, and as Gail Bederman succinctly notes, “Middle-class men were unusually obsessed with manhood at the turn of the century.”³⁰³ The historical forces of immigration, labor strife, professionalization of

³⁰³ Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 11. The term “masculinity crisis” contains sufficient

the middle-class, and the increasing role of women in the public sphere have all been suitably explored as a cause for male anxiety. For men contending with these contemporary forces of the Gilded Age, the logical response to cope with their feelings of inadequate manliness was to appropriate masculine attributes normally attached to workers, whose masculinity crisis stemmed not from urban life, but from the degrading effects of capitalism that threatened their economic independence. This type of masculinity, which Kevin White has labeled “underworld primitivism,” rejected notions of character and respectability that were so revered in Victorianism, and instead valued a “lewd, crude, sordid, animal, and brutal world.”³⁰⁴ These virtues of underworld primitivism were those that the Knights of Labor had previously tried to tame in favor of promoting respectability among its members. The process by which primitive values became more respectable in American society was ongoing, lasted several decades, and experienced its watershed period from roughly the late 1890s until the end of World War I. Various cultural forms, such as the mass media, sports, academia, politics, and literature—including works by Jack London and Frank Norris—helped to propagate Americans’ fascination with what Theodore Roosevelt and others referred to as red-blooded or passionate masculinity.

Since Roosevelt was such a central and public figure in American society in the twentieth century, his views on America’s changing conceptions of masculinity is a starting point. Historians have thoroughly documented Roosevelt’s biographical information with regard to how he constructed his own masculine identity. Growing up as a sickly youth, he later became a central proponent of a type of masculinity that Richard Slotkin calls, “Regeneration-through-regression,” in which men coped with the effeminizing influences of urban life characterized by

historiographical baggage. Feminist theorists generally refer to the term as an understanding that men’s patriarchal control over women was challenged; thus, men felt a crisis that their patriarchal power was contested. Historians argue over whether crises are “real” and felt by anxiety-ridden men, or “fabricated” as a means of re-centering men at the top of gender hierarchy.

³⁰⁴ Kevin White, *The First Sexual Revolution: The Emergence of Male Heterosexuality in Modern America* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), 8.

“the passage of a highly civilized man through a revivifying return to the life of an earlier stage.”³⁰⁵ According to Roosevelt, he staved off degeneration and urbane overcivilization by going west and transforming himself from a “dude,” or a “tenderfoot, greenhorn, or city slicker” to a “roughneck,” a term that indicates individual ruggedness and hardiness.³⁰⁶ It is not a coincidence that American men felt anxiety regarding their manhood around the same time that Frederick Jackson Turner gave his famous lecture that the frontier, where the authentic origins of American manhood rested, was closed. Turner’s thesis caused many men to become increasingly concerned about degeneration brought on by modernity and the urban city. In the decades before the reception of Turner’s thesis, Americans of the Gilded Age feared their diminishing manhood as a result of overcivilization, effeteness, and the rising number of diagnoses of middle-class “brain-workers” as neurasthenics. The professionalization of the middle-class further caused growing concern over diminishing manhood as middle-class “brain workers” no longer used their muscles and feared they would become either flabby and overweight, or thin and bookish. Thus, the American frontier seemingly promised to regenerate manhood by restoring the primitive and physical values of masculinity.³⁰⁷

Roosevelt spoke often on these fears of diminishing manhood, which opened him up to public criticism, especially from the radical press. Since Roosevelt advocated masculine regeneration through strenuous living on the frontier, radicals often depicted Roosevelt as a brute, or caveman, and gave him a bevy of nicknames to illustrate this, such as “Teddy the Tough,” “Terrible Teddy,” and “The Strenuous One.”³⁰⁸ In one particularly scathing article, George D. Herron in *The International Socialist Review* stated, “He is the embodiment of man’s

³⁰⁵ Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Atheneum, 1992), 38.

³⁰⁶ John Pettegrew, *Brutes in Suits: Male Sensibility in America, 1890-1920* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 74-75.

³⁰⁷ Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877-1920* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2009), 7-8, 25.

³⁰⁸ *Industrial Worker*, June 11, 1910; *Revolt*, May 6, 1911.

return to the brute—the living announcement that man will again seek relief from the sickness of society in the bonds of an imposing savagery.”³⁰⁹ Herron characterized Roosevelt as a beast “who has awakened the instinct to kill and conquer . . . who has put the blood-cup to the lips of the nation and bids the nation to drink.”³¹⁰ While these criticisms were not entirely unfounded, in actuality, Roosevelt developed a more complex vision of manhood than his critics charged him with. Roosevelt provided a more balanced image of ideal masculinity than one based solely on primal aggression.

Roosevelt’s understanding of manhood began to develop while he attended Harvard University, and he was greatly influenced by two men, William James, whom he studied under, and Owen Wister, a fellow student and friend who would become famous for writing the novel *The Virginian*. Like Roosevelt, James and Wister also engaged intellectually in the ongoing historical process of male anxiety and the turn-of-the-century call to action for a restoration of primitive masculinity. James, one of Harvard’s most celebrated instructors, was diagnosed as a neurasthenic in the 1860s, and he often dwelt on matters of male anxiety in his writings. While nerve tonics often claimed to provide relief for anxious-prone men, many men subscribed to Dr. Silas Weir Mitchell’s belief that the best cure for a neurasthenic was to live on the frontier. On the frontier, a man could experience the strenuous living that was inaccessible in the overcivilized city, and develop resistance to jangled nerves. Within this cultural atmosphere, it is important to see that at Harvard, one of the premier academic institutions in America, an increasing fascination with masculinity became apparent within the university’s culture. This was evident when considering the interest in football throughout the nation that enamored students who celebrated its pure physicality, or as Thorstein Veblen put it, its “exotic ferocity.” Furthermore, men celebrated what historian Elliot Gorn calls a “cult of muscularity.”

³⁰⁹ George D. Herron, “Theodore Roosevelt,” *The International Socialist Review* 10, no. 12, (June 1910): 1057-1058.

³¹⁰ Herron, 1058-1059.

Bodybuilders such as Eugene Sandow and Charles Atlas, and even magician Harry Houdini, developed their physical strength to present their muscular bodies as the bodies of “perfect men” who staved off the overcivilization of modern life. Concerns and anxiety of overcivilization primarily affected middle-class professionals.³¹¹

The combination of male anxiety rooted in physiological nervousness, and the cure that lay in rigorous, manly living and developing a muscular body, greatly contributed to Roosevelt’s most famous lecture on the subject of masculinity, an 1899 speech entitled “The Strenuous Life.” This particular speech set forth Roosevelt’s attitudes towards masculinity, as well as providing Americans with an icon, or model, of manhood. In this speech, Roosevelt’s contended that men should not subscribe to “the doctrine of ignoble ease, but the doctrine of the strenuous life, the life of toil and effort, of labor and strife.” The speech was a systematic denouncement of luxury and idleness, and it proposed that every American man and boy should seek a life of “hardship” if he wished to be a true man. Also, Roosevelt conflated the well-being of the nation with the health of the individual. “A healthy state,” he argued, “can exist only when the men and women who make it up lead clean, vigorous, healthy lives . . . The timid man, the lazy man, the man who distrusts his country, the over-civilized man, who has lost the great fighting, masterful virtues . . . shrink from seeing us do our share of the world’s work.” Thus, Roosevelt believed that just as the individual should strive for self-improvement, the American nation must be active in international affairs, otherwise the country would falter.³¹²

While “The Strenuous Life” showcased Roosevelt’s well-known attitudes towards the construction of a masculine identity, it did not fully develop Roosevelt’s overall

³¹¹ Kim Townsend, *Manhood at Harvard: William James and Others* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1996); John Pettegrew, *Brutes in Suits: Male Sensibility in America, 1890-1920* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 128-131, 306-318; Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899; repr., New York: Penguin Books, 1994), 261; Elliott J. Gorn, *The Manly Art: Bare-Knuckle Prize Fighting in America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 192; John F. Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man: The White Male Body and the Challenge of Modernity in America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001).

³¹² Theodore Roosevelt, *The Strenuous Life* (1899, repr. New York: The Review of Reviews Company, 1904), 3-9.

conceptualization of ideal manhood. Roosevelt always contended that courage, strength, and a strenuous lifestyle were important attributes of “true manhood,” but in another lecture, “Manhood and Statehood,” he claimed, “We need more than these qualities . . . If courage and strength and intellect are unaccompanied by the moral purpose, the moral sense, they become merely forms of expression for unscrupulous force and unscrupulous cunning.”³¹³ For Roosevelt, an ideal manhood was one that lent itself to being a well-rounded man. In the speech, “Character and Success,” he stated, “Bodily vigor is good, and vigor of intellect is even better, but far above both is character,” which he defines as the “assemblage of virtues, actives and passive, of moral qualities.”³¹⁴ Essentially, if a man only pursued activities to excess, then he would become either an overtly brutish bully or a bookish mollycoddle, so a balanced, moral character was needed to help develop a harmonious balance.

A discussion of Roosevelt’s speeches alone cannot fully show how American men embraced a reinvention of their manhood towards a more aggressive and passionate ideal. The type of masculinity that Roosevelt preached filtered into the American mainstream through cultural institutions of war, sports, youth organizations, and, eventually, radical groups such as the Industrial Workers of the World. Morality and character was a common theme in Roosevelt’s speeches, one that he used as the foundation for his belief that the United States had a moral purpose to expand and spread its civilization and institutions throughout the world. Throughout “The Strenuous Life,” Roosevelt spoke of the responsibility and duty of the nation’s military to do their part in “uplifting mankind.”³¹⁵ As a result, Roosevelt contended, these

³¹³ Roosevelt, 212.

³¹⁴ Roosevelt, 98-99.

³¹⁵ Roosevelt, 20.

martial ideals would rejuvenate and regenerate manhood by staving off idle degeneracy and the lack of “virile fighting qualities” evident among American men in modern society.³¹⁶

In the 1890s, America’s hypermasculine rhetoric escalated in the media and provided some of the impetus for American men to go to war; first, against Spain in Cuba and then against Filipino insurgents.³¹⁷ For historian John Pettegrew, these wars represented “the purest example of masculinist compulsion towards war the country has ever seen.”³¹⁸ When President William McKinley requested 200,000 military volunteers, so many men were anxious to prove their manhood through military service that the number of volunteers easily exceeded the request and the U.S. Army rejected over 50% of the applicants.³¹⁹ In a 1900 speech, Senator Albert Beveridge further drew connections between war and manhood when he said that the war brought the “opportunity for all the glorious young manhood of the republic—the most virile, ambitious, impatient, militant manhood the world has ever seen.”³²⁰ The imperial wars at the turn of the century offered men a chance to prove their manhood since masculinity, military service, voting rights, and political leadership formed potent connections. Politicians believed they could improve their political standing by posturing as manly men in favor of war. Men who opposed war, such as President William McKinley at first, feared they would lose their political authority if the public thought them to be weak and effeminate. Roosevelt added fuel to McKinley’s fears, when he famously quipped, “McKinley has no more backbone than a chocolate éclair.”³²¹

³¹⁶ Kevin P. Murphy, *Political Manhood: Red Bloods, Mollycoddles, and the Politics of Progressive Era Reform* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 59.

³¹⁷ Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting For American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998). In this work, Hoganson aims to add gender politics to the other reasons, including economic, imperialist, humanitarian, strategic, and racial arguments, for why America went to war in the late nineteenth century.

³¹⁸ Pettegrew, 218.

³¹⁹ Pettegrew, 218; Gerald F. Linderman, *The Mirror of War: American Society and the Spanish-American War* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1974), 63-64.

³²⁰ Quoted in Pettegrew, 220.

³²¹ Hoganson, 10, 91.

The masculine jingoism of the imperial age was a direct legacy of the Civil War, in which the veteran, including both Union and Confederate soldiers, were revered as the ultimate symbol of honor and manly character. Almost every Republican presidential candidate in the Gilded Age had been a Civil War soldier, many reaching the rank of General, and McKinley achieving the rank of Major.³²² With the war thirty years past and the number of surviving veterans decreasing, American men felt anxiety that the next generation of men lacked the manly fortitude required for political participation. Their concerns, exemplified by Theodore Roosevelt, often centered on self-doubt in that they had never gained the values of fraternalism and honor that war provided. Thus, for the new generation of American politicians—those who had been too young to serve in the Civil War—the war with Spain offered a powerful corrective to their perceived decline in their own manhood.³²³

War was not the only cultural affair that offered regeneration in virile masculinity. Other avenues, such as organized sports and youth organizations, flourished in the 1890s and early 1900s with the objective to regenerate American men and boys from modern, urban, and vice-ridden lifestyles. Since the body itself became a means of proving one's manhood, many men played sports, lifted weights, and participated in other physical activities in order to outwardly display their masculinity.³²⁴ This was not necessarily a new development in America; boxing, for decades, had been a popular sport among the immigrant sectors of urban society as a sport that was "a signal of defiance and independence . . . [it was the] lower class' expression of masculine prowess."³²⁵ Throughout the Gilded Age, men had demanded shorter workdays to have more leisure time, which would allow them to take a greater interest in both participating in

³²² Rebecca Edwards, *Angels in the Machinery: Gender in American Party Politics from the Civil War to the Progressive Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 32.

³²³ Hoganson, 21-29.

³²⁴ E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1993), 6.

³²⁵ Guy Reel, *The National Police Gazette and the Making of the Modern American Man, 1879-1906* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), 91.

sports and spending money as a spectator at sporting events. Sports became an important marker of male identity not coincidentally, at the same time that the need for physical strength in the workplace was diminishing as a result of mechanization and industrialization.

It is understandable, then, that sports experienced an increase in popularity. Sports became the avenue in which men could compete against one another, which was especially appropriate given that Social Darwinism, popularized as the notion of “survival of the fittest,” became a guiding ideology for American men. Thus, for men, as well as capitalists, sports offered more than just the opportunity to develop one’s muscles and bodily resistance to effete overcivilization, they also instilled other masculine values held in high esteem, including both individual competition and teamwork. Within this framework of passionate manhood, men were “obsessed with competition.”³²⁶ Boxing, once viewed as a savage sport that was suitable only for lower-class men, became the most popular sport in America. It was the ultimate sport in terms of testing one’s manhood by fighting other men, and the violent and rough edges of the sport were smoothed out by new rules, regulations, and scientific methods of training.

At the same time, team sports, such as baseball and college football, grew in popularity as they encouraged teamwork and cooperation that were still within the framework of competition. Competition was even a major focus for spectators, as fans developed loyalties to hometown or neighborhood teams that competed with teams from other ethnic backgrounds or cities. The values of teamwork stressed a “heroic subordination” to the team, in which one man’s individual successes were secondary to the success of the team. However, a man could still gain individual glory by lifting his team to victory, which provided ample reasons for why sports played such a substantial role in the construction of a man’s male identity.³²⁷

³²⁶ Rotundo, 245.

³²⁷ Rotundo, 241.

Lurking beneath the manly values of competition and teamwork offered by sports was a growing capitalistic corporate culture, in which virtues like loyalty to one's team, or company, were now expected. Industrialization had also brought professionalization in American business, and the white-collar worker surfaced as a man who "has no independence while in office, no manhood . . . he must openly avow his implicit faith in all his superiors, on pain of dismissal, and must cringe and fawn upon them."³²⁸ The emergence of corporate culture affected more than just white-collar workers. As in sports, business owners yearned to gain the loyalty of their workers with the aim of benefiting the success of the company above their own individual selves, primarily by not going on strike. Workers who went on strike did so with the specter of unemployment and dismissal looming, as they had not proven their loyalty to the company.

Within this new construction of passionate manhood, the individual's relationship to society was changing, especially in regards to the issue of subordinating one's interests to the group. Corporations actively promoted a paradoxical situation in which men should subordinate their manhood to the betterment of the company; yet, industrial elites derided the existence of unions, despite the fraternalism and solidarity it offered, and made the claim that unions suppressed manly individuality. For the political and industrial elite, the best way to instill subordinate masculinity and loyalty among the lower classes was to try and develop this attribute when men were still boys and in a position of subordination to their elders. Youth organizations like the YMCA, which formed in 1851, and the Boy Scouts, established in 1910, experienced a surge in popularity in the twentieth century, with the latter organization consisting of 358,373 youth scouts and 15,117 scoutmasters by the end of its first decade. Just as in sports, the Boy Scouts sought to combat the overcivilization of "gilded youth" in the cities by encouraging healthy bodies, minds, and souls. American men hoped the anxiety they felt concerning the

³²⁸ Cindy Aron, *Ladies and Gentleman of the Civil Service: Middle-Class Workers in Victorian America, 1840-1870* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 188.

“closing” of the frontier could be alleviated with youth organizations and development. Since “the wilderness is gone,” stated Daniel Carter Beard in his 1914 report on the state of the Boy Scouts, “the hardships and privations of pioneer life which did so much to develop sterling manhood are now but a legend in history . . . we must depend upon the Boy Scout Movement to produce the MEN of the future.” Carter contended that the way to accomplish this was by bringing youths back to the frontier to learn practical survival skills, and show that “the REAL Boy Scout is not a ‘sissy.’” In the Boy Scouts, competition, teamwork, and subordination all played roles in that scouts competed for individual merit badges based off learned skills, but they still learned how to cooperate with fellow troops, and become disciplined youths under their scout master.³²⁹ As for the YMCA, their organizational goals attempted to instill Christian morals and sculpt healthy bodies through athletic exercise. These groups were part of a larger movement known as “muscular Christianity,” in which leaders of the movement sought to refashion Christ as a manly figure, and no longer, as Socialist Eugene V. Debs put it, “meek and lowly.”³³⁰ Through these youth organizations, along with muscular Christianity, passionate manhood was instilled into American youths. These movements sought to regenerate the body, mind, and soul, and they went hand-in-hand with masculine virtues that de-emphasized, to a certain degree, the independence of men.

With such pervasiveness of this idealized passionate manhood, in which American men focused more intently on muscular bodies, and on values of teamwork and competition, the Industrial Workers of the World desired to appropriate these contemporary masculine virtues within their organizational culture. Although the IWW’s main goals were economic, a delicately

³²⁹ Daniel Carter Beard, “Boy Scouts of America: 4th Annual Report.” *Scouting*, Vol. 1 (1914), 119; J.E. West, “The Real Boy Scout,” *Leslie’s Weekly*, (1912), 448; quoted in Jeffrey P. Hantover, “The Boy Scouts and the Validation of Masculinity,” *The American Man*, ed. Elizabeth H. Pleck and Joseph H. Pleck (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1980), 285, 291, 295.

³³⁰ Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969), 64.

crafted manly identity was one of the primary means by which they tried to increase their membership and influence public perception. Their publications—including newspapers, historical accounts, visual images, and pamphlets—and their singing culture provide a distinct view of the type of manhood that the IWW attempted to instill into its movement. Ultimately, the IWW crafted an ideal masculinity that valued physical strength, aggressive red-blooded tactics of direct action, and even subordination to the “One Big Union” through its promotion of solidarity.

The organization first developed its ideological and gender identities within its founding documents. The IWW formed at a convention in Chicago in June 1905 that was attended by various socialists, anarchists, and trade union leaders. The Western Federation of Miners (WFM), a group that had led substantial strikes in the West during the 1890s and early 1900s in places such as Coeur d’Alene and Cripple Creek, was the only notable group that sent a large presence, which included Bill Haywood and Charles Moyer. Many WFM members had previously belonged to the Knights of Labor or had actively been involved in Populism earlier in their careers. Prominent socialists such as Eugene V. Debs and Daniel DeLeon also attended the convention. However, other socialists, such as Victor Berger and Max Hayes, rejected the invitation, as they still hoped that the Socialist Party could win over the American Federation of Labor (AFL), which consisted exclusively of skilled workers. The most prominent anarchist at the convention was Lucy Parsons, the wife of Albert Parsons, who was executed in the aftermath of the Haymarket bombing. Due to the unorganized, if not motley, origins of the group, substantial disagreement emerged among the contentious parties, especially concerning whether the group was going to endorse politics and the Socialist party.³³¹

³³¹ Dubofsky, 32-35, 52-55, 76-87; Joseph Robert Conlin, *Bread and Roses Too: Studies of the Wobblies* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Corporation, 1969), 1-4; Salvatore Salerno, *Red November Black November: Culture and Community in the Industrial Workers of the World* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989). While Dubofsky and Conlin give more impetus to the indigenous, or American, origins of the IWW, Salerno contends that

In its earliest years of formation, founding members of the IWW debated the purpose of the organization. Eventually two factions formed within the group: Socialist Party icons, such as Daniel DeLeon, who wanted the group to obtain the party's goals through political action, and unionists, most notably William Haywood, who rejected politics in favor of direct action. DeLeon and his Socialist Party followers believed the best course of action was through the ballot box by electing radicals who would implement change. However, the faction that rejected politics understood the practical realities of early-Progressive Era politics. The IWW desired recruits, such as women, immigrants, minorities, child workers, and many migrant, or seasonal, laborers, who had been disenfranchised in the political process. Their policy of direct action was intended to provide a foundation of support for the workers, and it implemented the use of economic tactics, such as the general strike, in order to abolish industrial capitalism. Another form of direct action included sabotage, which did not merely entail the destruction of corporate property. Other forms of sabotage included: slacking off on the job, informing the customer of the muckraking truth of the product they were buying—especially important in the food industry of the Progressive Era—and giving benefits and discounts to the customer that hurt the employer's bottom line. Haywood and his followers believed that the tactics of direct action provided better potential for success, given that widespread electoral victories were unlikely. Haywood basically considered politics to be a "waste of time."³³² Their tactics of direct action and ideology of solidarity encapsulate what historian Francis Shor defines as "virile syndicalism," or the "masculine posturing" of workers that challenged industrial capitalists who

European immigrants infused the group with ideas of revolutionary syndicalism brought from Europe. The main idea of revolutionary syndicalism (also known as anarcho-syndicalism) is Marxist in origins, meaning that trade unions alone would not be enough to bring economic balance, but that the whole capitalist state had to be overthrown.

³³² William Haywood, "The General Strike," *Industrial Workers of the World* (March 16, 1911), <http://www.iww.org/culture/official/Haywood1.shtml> [accessed February, 20 2011].

sought to deemphasize worker cooperation.³³³ Eventually, at the 1908 convention, the schism between DeLeon and the IWW became permanent when DeLeon was ousted from the organization, which now fully adopted direct action over political action.

Yet, despite the early sectarianism, the IWW delegates produced a viable manifesto and an organizational preamble that gave shape to its position on labor unionism as well as providing an implicit understanding of their conceptualization of masculinity. Thomas Hagerty, a former Roman Catholic priest who converted to socialism, was a key composer of the two most famous documents produced by the IWW in 1905, namely the Industrial Union Manifesto, written in January, and the Preamble to the IWW Constitution, written in June. Taken in unison, these two documents outline the IWW's organizational goals in regards to industrial unionism, and provide insight into how gender expectations framed their line of reasoning. The Manifesto criticized not only the capitalist structure of the United States, but also craft unionism. Under craft unionism, workers organized under their specific craft, such as textiles or cigar-makers, with each serving its own interests. The industrial unionists met in Chicago in 1905 with the hopes of uniting all the craft unions under "One Big Union" or the IWW. The rationale behind this, according to the Manifesto, was that the craft union system "shatters the ranks of the workers into fragments, rendering them helpless and impotent on the industrial battlefield."³³⁴ The usage of the word impotent should not be overlooked given the historical context in which red-blooded masculinity had become more widespread. In fact, other aspects of the Manifesto were written in the tradition of American radicals who charged industrial capitalism with destroying men's bodies.

The Manifesto further attempted to appropriate contemporary values of masculine solidarity in order to legitimize the IWW as "One Big Union." It proclaimed, "The capitalists

³³³ Francis Shor, "'Virile Syndicalism' in Comparative Perspective: A Gender Analysis of the IWW in the United States and Australia," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 56, (Fall 1999): 68.

³³⁴ Vincent St. John, "Manifesto On Organizing the Industrial Workers of the World," *The IWW: Its History, Structure and Methods* (Chicago: IWW Publishing Bureau, 1917).

need use the workers only during that brief period when muscles and nerve respond most intensely. The moment the laborer no longer yields the maximum of profits he is thrown upon the scrap pile, to starve alongside the discarded machine.” Thus, when unskilled workers were discharged from their jobs or duties, they were forced to find new work, often becoming scabs, and “hatred of worker for worker is engendered, and the workers are delivered helpless and disintegrated into the hands of the capitalists.”³³⁵ Furthermore, craft unions, which were limited to workers in a specific field, had often proven ineffective at preventing the exploitation of workers. Since unskilled men were generally not unionized, and skilled workers were usually punished with monetary fines upon transferring to new craft unions, competition emerged among crafts that divided workers with regard to their skill level and industrial field, and prevented solidarity. The concept of “One Big Union” and its emphasis on masculine solidarity was vital to the success of industrial unionism because it needed to eliminate the conflicts that existed between skilled, unskilled, and scab workers in the craft unions.

In addition to the Manifesto, the Preamble to the IWW Constitution was one of the organization’s most important documents, as well as its most read. This document was included in many of the organization’s publications, including all issues of the IWW’s popular *Little Red Songbook*. The ideas presented in the Preamble shared much in common with that of the Manifesto. First, it proclaimed that trade unions had brought fragmentation and conflict among workingmen. Trade unions, the document states, “Mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.” However, as the document aggressively began, “The working class and the employing class have nothing in common.” The tone of the document was uncompromising and it served to instill a revolutionary scope to prepare its members for the “everyday struggle with capitalists.” The language of the document

³³⁵ St. John, “Manifesto.”

was also infused with masculine rhetoric, as well as allusions to previous radical movements. Similar to the Manifesto, the Preamble emphasized the “hunger and want” of the millions of workers who have been denied fair wages and have been unable to fulfill their masculine duty as patriarchal breadwinners. Furthermore, the Preamble’s line, “An injury to one an injury to all” was a direct reference to the Knights of Labor motto, “An injury to one is the concern of all.” It is significant that the word “concern” was changed to “injury,” as the Preamble clearly intended to emphasize the degradation and bodily harm suffered by workers in the wage system over sentimental “concerns.” For the IWW, the only way to overcome such injuries, then, was to strike back with revolutionary fervor.³³⁶

Ultimately, these two documents set forth much of the ideology of the IWW, but they also provided brief allusions to the values of solidarity and fairness that the organization held in high regard. Since much of the ideological basis of the IWW was against the fragmentation of workers caused by trade unions, solidarity became the main focus. During the 1905 convention, Bill Haywood, who eventually became one of the leaders of the IWW, announced, “What we want to establish at this time is a labor organization that will open wide its doors to every man that earns his livelihood either by his brain or his muscles.”³³⁷ By referencing both brain and muscle work, Haywood showed his desire to unite workers of all classes, as opposed to unionizing solely the unskilled, replaceable workers that toiled in more physically demanding occupations. Within this framework, solidarity included acceptance of all workers, even those traditionally excluded from labor organizations, such as immigrants, women, and African-Americans. This was a sharp contrast from the AFL, which originally only allowed skilled workers into its union and was not too concerned with recruiting women workers.

³³⁶ Vincent St. John, “I.W.W. Preamble,” *The IWW: Its History, Structure and Methods* (Chicago: IWW Publishing Bureau, 1917).

³³⁷ Conlin, 4.

The percentage of women in the workforce rose from 16% to 20% from 1870-1900, and their increasing role in the public sphere exacerbated tension between the sexes. Traditional men believed that work was meant to be difficult and dirty, or a “noble sacrifice,” in which women, because of their stereotypically more delicate nature, had no part. However, the economic realities and inequalities in the Gilded Age often meant that women, especially single women, had to work.³³⁸ With regards to the role of women within the IWW, the organization actively recruited working-class women, but it did not necessarily support feminist issues. Ann Schofield argues that even though the IWW “theoretically, did go one step further than any other labor organization in their view of women,” women IWW members, typified as the Rebel Girl, were “not freed from domesticity by the coming of the One Big Union . . . rather, she played a domestic role both in the oppressed present and the liberated future.”³³⁹ This expected domesticity of women displayed by the IWW worked in unison with other contemporary labor unions, such as the AFL and its leader Samuel Gompers, who stated, “The wife or mother, attending to the duties of the home, makes the greatest contribution to the support of the family.”³⁴⁰ The IWW’s stance on women further showed continuity with past labor and radical groups, such as the Knights of Labor, which also recruited women based more on class and economic issues than on gender.

With regard to specific gender issues facing women in the Progressive Era, the IWW tended to view these through the prism of class instead of gender. The IWW was against woman’s suffrage, not necessarily because they did not believe in equality for women, but because the IWW did not have faith in the power of the ballot box in general. Female Wobblies viewed suffrage as a middle-class issue, and not one that concerned working-class women.

³³⁸ Kimmel, 60, 67.

³³⁹ Ann Schofield, “Rebel Girls and Union Maids: The Woman Question in the Journals of the AFL and IWW, 1905-1920,” *Feminist Studies* 9, no. 2 (1983), 335, 355.

³⁴⁰ Samuel Gompers, “Should the Wife Help to Support the Family?” *American Federationist* 13 (January 1906), 36; quoted in Schofield, 343.

Similarly, for other popular causes in regards to women, especially birth control, the IWW supported it as an issue of class, not gender. An opinion piece from the *Industrial Worker* asserted, “We don’t believe that woman is merely a sock-darning incubator . . . We do know that too many babies lower the laborer’s standard of living.”³⁴¹ Thus, the IWW recruited women workers and supported the strike of women textile workers in Paterson, New Jersey and Lawrence, Massachusetts for economic reasons. The Wobblies wanted women to have equal wages so that women either would not be employed as scabs or so men would have higher wages, which would allow women to return to the home. When the capitalist press charged the Wobblies with wanting to “destroy the home” by recruiting women workers, the Wobblies retorted, “Our aims are homes where love can grow and blossom in the fruitful soil of childish, carefree laughter, where womanhood can attain heights as yet undreamed and impossible under slavery.”³⁴² The “woman question” for many male IWW members was answered by the fact that men and women must work together in solidarity to reach their economic goals, and not necessarily overturn the contemporary structure of the public and private spheres.³⁴³

Within the IWW, women, most notably Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, participated in direct action. Flynn participated in strikes in Lawrence, Massachusetts, and Paterson, New Jersey, and she went on trial in Spokane during the free speech fights. Rosalyn Baxandall’s biography of Flynn, *Words on Fire*, contends that during her years as a Wobbly organizer she expressed “traditional socialist rather than feminist” ideals, but that she was concerned with women’s issues too. According to Baxandall, Flynn fit in well among the “macho and crude” Wobblies who saw her both as an “elegant lady” and as the rebel girl who “drank, joked, talked dirty, and

³⁴¹ *Industrial Worker*, April 1, 1916, quoted in Schofield, 341.

³⁴² *Industrial Worker*, May 6, 1916, quoted in Schofield, 348.

³⁴³ Morse, 112-115.

basked in their admiration.”³⁴⁴ She was also a talented orator; city officials considered Flynn to be the most dangerous of the Wobblies because “she makes all the trouble. She puts fight into the men, gets them the publicity they enjoy.”³⁴⁵ In 1915, Flynn produced a popular pamphlet on sabotage that was widely distributed in which she taught workers the value of slowing down on the job, and of having an “Open Mouth,” or telling consumers the truth about the goods in restaurants and stores. Her pamphlet further reinforced the notion that sabotage was a manly approach to combating capitalism. She wrote,

There is another argument to the effect that ‘if you use this thing called sabotage you are going to develop in yourself a spirit of hostility . . . you are going to become sneaking, you are going to become cowardly’ . . . [I contend] it requires courage. It requires individuality. It creates in the workingman some self-respect . . . Instead of being sneaking and cowardly [it] is a courageous thing, an open thing.³⁴⁶

Although, the pamphlet revealed Flynn’s use of gender language to spur on her male comrades, she later regretted publishing *Sabotage*. In her autobiography, Flynn admitted, “After a few years, I no longer agreed with much of what I had said there on the desirability of advocating sabotage,” especially because the federal government used the pamphlet as evidence to prosecute Wobblies.³⁴⁷ Overall, women such as Flynn played an important role in the organization, but that role was tempered by the expectations that the Wobblies intended to uphold traditional gender roles after the overturning of the capitalist state.

As an inclusive organization, the Wobblies emphasized solidarity in order to combat capitalism. Much of the IWW’s understanding of solidarity came from Edward Bellamy, a prominent radical of the 1870s and 80s who led a movement known as Nationalism that was

³⁴⁴ Rosalyn Fraad Baxandall, *Words on Fire: The Life and Writing of Elizabeth Gurley Flynn* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 9, 14.

³⁴⁵ Dubofsky, 181.

³⁴⁶ Baxandall, 132; first published in Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, *Sabotage: The Conscious Withdrawal of the Workers’ Industrial Efficiency* (Cleveland: IWW Publishing Bureau, 1915).

³⁴⁷ Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, *The Rebel Girl: An Autobiography, My First Life* (1955; repr. New York: International Publishers, 1973), 163.

based on his utopian book, *Looking Backward*. Set over one hundred years in the future, the book predicted that capitalist competition had been replaced by “the solidarity of the race and the brotherhood of man.”³⁴⁸ Although Bellamy’s own Nationalism movement ended with his death from tuberculosis in 1898, his ideas filtered into future socialist and progressive agendas, and he helped to influence radicals like Debs and DeLeon. Although inclusivity and solidarity were primarily rooted in economic terms—cooperation among the workers was necessary to overthrow capitalism—they also had a gender component. Debs, a delegate at the founding convention, especially linked solidarity to communal ideas of manhood. He began one popular speech with the line, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” to emphasize that men had a moral obligation to help their fellow men. These communal ideas were highly relevant in a period of excessive competition in which vertically integrated companies maximized profits at the expense of humanitarian concern of the working-class. The Wobblies’ manifesto states, “The moment the laborer no longer yields the maximum of profits, he is thrown upon the scrap pile, to starve alongside the discarded machine . . . [The worker] is forced to accept whatever humiliating conditions his master may impose.”³⁴⁹ Historian Peter Stearns contends, “For many in the working class, uncertain about their manly status in the workplace, periodic protest, shared among brothers, was a vital way to claim their masculinity.”³⁵⁰ Thus, the Wobblies called on each other to help restore their victimized and humiliated manhood under the banner of solidarity.

It should be noted that solidarity did not entirely entail values of subordination to the group at the expense of one’s own prosperity; it also highly valued individualism. During this

³⁴⁸ Donald E. Winters, Jr., *The Soul of the Wobblies: The IWW, Religion, and American Culture in the Progressive Era, 1905-1917* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985), 26-28; Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward: 2000-1887*, Daniel H. Borus, ed. (Boston: Bedford St. Martin’s, 1995), 16-22.

³⁴⁹ Joyce Kornbluh, ed., *Rebel Voices: An I.W.W. Anthology* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1964), 7.

³⁵⁰ Peter Stearns, *Be a Man! Males in Modern Society*, 2nd ed. (New York, Holmes & Meier, 1990), 100.

period of passionate masculinity, a dominant trend of teamwork, cooperation, and solidarity had pervaded many aspects of society, such as in popular team sports, or the Boy Scouts. However, just as an athlete could lift his team to a victory, or a Boy Scout could prove individual prowess, the IWW still believed that members could prove their manliness as individuals through the organizational tactics of direct action, which included going on strike, and committing acts of sabotage. Yet, this individualism would be judged in the public sphere by how well the man related to his peers, as it stated in the *Industrial Worker*, “Let us be INDIVIDUALISTS but individualists who are intelligent enough to see that our individualism is best served by cooperation, UNIONISM, an alliance with those whose interests are in harmony with ours.”³⁵¹ For the IWW, solidarity and individual action were not just abstract ideas with little connection to reality, but a belief system that could be practiced in daily working life through direct action.

One of the IWW’s major challenges of establishing solidarity among workers remained in how to convert individual workingmen, especially migrant workers, into committed unionists who were devoted to the practice of direct action. Due to the harsh realities of early twentieth century capitalism, workingmen were often single, nomadic workers negatively typecast as “tramps.” Workers, especially in the less congested West, often lived migratory lives and floated from job to job and city to city looking for work. Men were often dependent on their fellow workers for lodging and food if they were unable to find work. Contemporaries generally denigrated tramps and portrayed them as a “danger to the community,” especially since middle-class Americans perceived them to be degenerate criminals and violent brutes. The stigma of the dangerous tramp was especially true before the economic crisis of the 1890s, and it was not just the ruling classes that constructed this stigma. In the fictional works published by the Knights of Labor, tramps were often minor, stock villains who were willing dupes of the business elite. For

³⁵¹ “Sympathy,” *Industrial Worker*, May 21, 1910; quoted in Winters, 26.

example, in Frederick Whitaker's *Larry Locke, Man of Iron*, the factory owner's son bribes a tramp to steal the money that Larry Locke, a union organizer, needs to pay his rent. Since Larry is unable to pay his rent, a businessman attempts to prostitute Larry's wife so the family will not be evicted.³⁵² This fictional work was one of many that stigmatized migratory laborers and tramps as threats to honest workingmen. The central conflict that union men had with tramps was that migrants were much harder to organize because of their migratory nature. It became much more difficult to coordinate a successful strike if tramps could be used as scabs or strikebreakers.

A gender explanation further serves to clarify why working-class organizations abetted in constructing a negative stigma of the tramp during the Gilded Age. Since many union organizations' primary masculine ideal was social respectability, unions needed to disassociate themselves from the perceived lack of manly respectability evident within tramping culture. Union men bought into the dominant ideals of manhood at the time, which held that men should be the sober, industrious, and breadwinning patriarch of a respectable home. To them, a tramp represented drunkenness and laziness, a man without a family to provide for, and he had no respectable place to call home. Furthermore, union men of the Gilded Age often still bought into the masculine ideal of the Self-Made Man. As radicals were developing nascent critiques that industrial capitalism served as a roadblock to individual economic success, political and industrial elites espoused the theory of Social Darwinism. Certainly, to both bosses and respectable workingmen, the tramp was clearly the most unfit man in society. The tramp was the most visible example of a failed man, and rather than finding fault in industrial capitalism, American men stigmatized the tramp as an idle drunk who failed because of his own unmanly shortcomings. Furthermore, when a tramp resorted to begging, he alienated himself from

³⁵² Mary C. Grimes, ed., *The Knights in Fiction: Two Labor Novels of the 1880s* (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1986).

respectable workingmen who earned their keep and abided by a masculine producerist ethos. Facing this social alienation, the migratory worker was, more than likely, unaffiliated with fraternal and union organization, which compounded the negative attitudes towards tramps among unions and workingmen.

Attitudes towards tramps slowly began to shift after the economic crisis of the 1890s left thousands of workers poor and unemployed. As a result, middle-class progressives, workers, and unions started to portray tramps sympathetically as men who struggled to make a living in the harsh and unforgiving world of industrial capitalism. When unemployment rates reached as high as 25% in some cities after the Panic of 1893, Jacob Sechler Coxey, a Populist politician, led an “industrial army” of unemployed workers on a march to the nation’s capital. Coxey was actually a millionaire who had made his fortune by operating a sandstone quarry in Ohio, but he was sympathetic to the plight of American workingmen. Carl Browne, another leader of the march, was a truly western man who wore a leather coat, cavalry boots, and a sombrero. He resembled a performer from a Buffalo Bill Wild West show, and exemplified the rugged, frontier masculinity that the marchers embraced. Although the march brought attention to the problem of unemployment, journalists following the march referred to them as “grotesque and ridiculous,” and as “beggars . . . agitators, patent-medicine men, negroes, tramps [and] cranks.” When Coxey and his men arrived in Washington D.C., they met resistance from local policemen who, armed with clubs, dispersed the marchers. As a result of the march, some Americans became more sensitive, but not wholly accepting, of the economic realities that tramps faced. *Chicago Record* reporter Ray Stannard Baker showed these shifting attitudes when he declared, “I am beginning to feel that the movement . . . is a manifestation of the prevailing unrest and dissatisfaction

among the laboring classes.”³⁵³ Historian Frank Tobias Higbie further attributes this shift in attitude towards tramps as a result of the increasing growth in unemployment, unions that excluded unskilled workers, and most importantly, social scientists, such as Carleton Parker, a professor at the University of California, who lived amongst migrant workers and produced muckraking publications that revealed the plight of western workers to middle-class audiences. Now viewed as “casual,” “migratory,” or “floating” workers instead of “tramps,” seasonal laborers gained sympathy from social reformers who “criticized the autocratic tactics of employers and the atrocious living conditions of migratory workers.”³⁵⁴

The IWW accepted and recruited seasonal laborers primarily because Wobblies believed that migrant workers were the men most likely to become scabs, which would disrupt their practices of direct action and the general strike. In the *IWW Defense News Bulletin*, the strikebreaker, or scab, was defined as such:

After God had made the rattlesnake, the toad and the vampire, He had some awful substances left with which he made a scab. A scab is a two-legged brain, a combination backbone made of jelly and glue. Where others have hearts, he carries a tumor of rotten principle. When a scab comes down the street, honest men turn their backs, and the angels weep tears in Heaven, and the devil shuts the gates of hell to keep them out. No man has a right to scab as long as there is a pool of water deep enough to drown his body in, or a rope long enough to hang his carcass with . . . The modern strikebreaker sells his birthright, his country, his wife, his children and his fellowmen for a temporary job from a trust or corporation.³⁵⁵

As this passage shows, masculinity was an important tool that the IWW emphasized in order to depict the proper behavior of workingmen. They condemned the seasonal laborers who aided corporations by being hired as strikebreakers as weakly cowards, and claimed the non-unionized tramp would be shunned both on Earth and in the eternal afterlife. The passage

³⁵³ Ray Stannard Baker, “A Symptom,” *Chicago Record*, 30 March, 1894; quoted in Michael S. Sweeney, “The Desire for the Sensational: Coxey’s Army and the Argus-eyed Demons of Hell,” *Journalism History* 23 (Autumn 1997), 114-125.

³⁵⁴ Frank Tobias Higbie, *Indispensable Outcasts: Hobo Workers and Community in the American Midwest, 1880-1930* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 84-87.

³⁵⁵ “The Strikebreaker,” *Industrial Workers of the World Defense News Bulletin*, November 3, 1917.

displays contemporary expectations of manhood in that workers should provide for their wives, children, and fellow workers. In practice, the Wobblies heavily recruited seasonal laborers and established “jungle camps” near rail lines on the outskirts of town. These “jungles” allowed Wobblies to recruit new workers off the trains, but also send Wobblies to participate in the nearest free speech fight or strike.³⁵⁶

Those tramps that resisted joining the IWW often faced harsh reprisals. Joseph Murphy, a migrant agricultural worker, recalled that Wobblies would throw men without a red Wobbly card off the freight trains that the seasonal laborers rode from job to job. Murphy admits that many seasonal laborers “took out a card just to ride the trains.”³⁵⁷ Furthermore, many of the Wobblies’ cultural productions, most notably Joe Hill’s song “Scissor Bill,” criticized the tramps who rejected the IWW and union organizing. The narrative of Hill’s song concerns a tramp “found in every mining camp” who “never organized and never will.” Scissor Bill, an unrespectable drunkard, also professed racist beliefs against Chinese, African-American, and European workers, rejecting the IWW’s stance on solidarity. Ultimately, Hill depicts Scissor Bill as “the missing link that Darwin tried to trace” to show the lack of manhood of those workers who refused to accept solidarity and IWW organizing.³⁵⁸ In drawing these conceptual boundaries between the manly union man and the unrespectable tramp, the Wobblies were not only defining expectations of proper manhood, but also asserting a higher status than that of the migratory scab. Knowing that they lived a life that was perilously close to that of the scab and depended on the whims of the market and their employers, Wobblies set out to differentiate their masculine practice of direct action against the unmanly subordination to industrial elites that the scab represented.

³⁵⁶ Salerno, 8-9.

³⁵⁷ Stewart Bird, Dan Georgakas, and Deborah Shaffer, *Solidarity Forever: An Oral History of the IWW* (Chicago: Lake View Press, 1985), 45.

³⁵⁸ Joe Hill, “Scissor Bill” *The Little Red Song Book* 19th ed. (Chicago: IWW Publishing Bureau, 1923), 10.

In order to reconcile the hostility towards tramps with the reality that industrial capitalism created the situation of migratory work, the IWW needed to openly accept and recruit seasonal laborers like the fictional icon, Scissor Bill. In doing this, they desired to instill brotherhood, solidarity, and union membership among all workers, including those who were tramps. In many towns, the IWW built union halls, usually located in the part of the city that migrant laborers called “the main stem.” On the main stem, there were restaurants, bars, boarding houses, and cheap entertainment that were specifically suited for seasonal workers, or tramps.³⁵⁹ According to Ralph Chaplin, editor of the IWW newspaper *Solidarity*, the union hall served an important role for migrant workers. At the IWW hall, the worker could receive lectures or read books on history, science, economics, and socialism. IWW-produced labor periodicals, such as *Solidarity* and *The Industrial Worker*, were stocked on the shelves, and workers could discuss these issues in a “weekly open forum.” Yet, the hall was not designed solely as a place for educating workers, but as a place where “men can gather around a crackling wood fire, smoke their pipes and warm their souls with the glow of comradeship. Here they can . . . discuss the vicissitudes of their daily lives, read their books and magazines and sing their songs of solidarity.”³⁶⁰ The IWW union halls established a meeting place to encourage the “brotherhood of man” that the Wobblies were intent on establishing in order to help workers cope with the degradation of working conditions.³⁶¹ Due to its importance for the IWW, union halls were frequently targeted. Patriotic Americans during World War I committed raids on the halls, burned literature, and attacked the men inside.

³⁵⁹ Higbie, 33.

³⁶⁰ Ralph Chaplin, *The Centralia Conspiracy*, 2nd ed. Facsimile Reproduction (1920; repr., Seattle, The Shorey Book Store, 1971), 24-25.

³⁶¹ The term Wobblies is one of unknown origin, but is used to refer to IWW members. One popular theory is that the term was originally used by mainstream Americans to ridicule IWW men and women, but was eventually accepted as a term of endearment by the organization.

Within the IWW halls, the act of singing songs, usually taken from *The Little Red Song Book*, became the most popular method that the IWW encouraged in order to develop solidarity and class-consciousness among permanent and migratory workers. Since so many western workers and IWW members were migrants, they often faced difficulty in establishing residency for voting purposes. In being shut out from the ballot box, many migrant workers turned to singing in order to “fan the flames of discontent,” according to the slogan that was prominently displayed on the cover of *The Little Red Song Book*. Furthermore, migrant workers had substantial leisure time, usually due to high unemployment rates, and according to J.H. Walsh of the *Industrial Union Bulletin*, these workers “around the headquarters have little to do but . . . compose poetry and work up songs for old tunes.”³⁶² IWW songwriters, such as Ralph Chaplin and Joe Hill, emphasized themes of solidarity, manly strength, producerism, and idleness among the wealthy. Chaplin’s popular song, “Solidarity Forever” addressed many of these themes:

When the Union’s inspiration through the workers’ blood shall run,
There can be no power greater anywhere beneath the sun.
Yet what force on earth is weaker than the feeble strength of one?
But the union makes us strong.

Chorus:
Solidarity forever!
Solidarity forever!
Solidarity forever!
But the Union makes us strong.

Is there aught we hold in common with the greedy parasite
Who would lash us into serfdom and would crush us with his might?
Is there anything left to us but to organize and fight?
For the Union makes us strong.

It is we who plowed the prairies; built the cities where they trade.
Dug the mines and built the workshops; endless miles of railroad laid.
Now we stand, outcast and starving, ‘mid the wonders we have made;
But the Union makes us strong.

All the world that’s owned by idle drones, is ours and ours alone.

³⁶² *Industrial Union Bulletin*, April 4, 1908; quoted in Winters, 37-40;

We have laid the wide foundations; built it skywards stone by stone.
It is ours, not to slave in, but to master and to own,
While the Union makes us strong.

They have taken untold millions that they never toiled to earn,
But without our brain and muscle not a single wheel can turn.
We can break their haughty power; gain our freedom when we learn
That the Union makes us strong.

In our hands is placed a power greater than their hoarded gold;
Greater than the might of armies, magnified a thousand-fold.
We can bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old,
For the Union makes us strong.³⁶³

The theme of solidarity is obviously repeated throughout the song, most notably in the chorus, and the concluding line of each verse, “That the union makes us strong.” Within this song, solidarity and union stood as the ultimate example of masculine strength. These cherished values of the IWW granted the powerless migratory worker with a weapon to strike back against the wealthy elites who would be unable to hire strikebreaking scabs if workingmen stood together. Furthermore, the song displayed masculine expectations, as it deems the capitalist class to be idle and “greedy parasites” who “never toiled to earn,” whereas workers, farmers, and miners, are praised for both their “brain and muscle.” The song ultimately fits well into the contemporary trend of the Progressive Era that favored aggressive, strong, and red-blooded masculinity, and it also placed a manly ideal that was achieved through solidarity by the migrant workers who did not succumb to the boss’s plan to pit workers against each other. Wobbly songs, the organization’s preamble, and the newspapers and radical books stocked in the IWW union halls helped to educate both migratory workers on why they should not scab, as well as union men on why they should accept migrant laborers into their ranks to achieve solidarity.

Of all the materials put out by the IWW, *The Little Red Song Book* achieved the most popularity among the Wobblies, and the songs held both symbolic and didactic importance. The

³⁶³ Ralph Chaplin, “Solidarity Forever,” *The Little Red Songbook*, 19th ed. (Chicago: The IWW Publishing Bureau, 1923), 15.

very act of singing as a group signaled unity and solidarity, the values that the IWW desired to instill among workingmen. Songwriting also provided an outlet for individual creativity within the organization, and it became a path to notoriety for Joe Hill, a Swedish immigrant, migrant worker, and IWW member who joined in 1910. His songs from *The Little Red Songbook*, including “Scissor Bill,” “Casey Jones,” “The Tramp,” and “Mr. Block,” were well known among workers and IWW members. The topics in Hill’s songwriting showed how the IWW planned to educate the working class. In his songs, Hill’s most prevalent themes were solidarity of the working class, capitalism’s degrading effects on men’s bodies and families, sympathy for tramps who “were not the kind to shirk,” and the manliness of direct action.³⁶⁴ Ultimately, Hill’s songs reflected the organization’s attitude towards turn-of-the century masculinity and they established appropriate behavior of true Wobbly men.

The event that really catapulted Hill into national fame was his trial and execution for the murder of a Salt Lake City grocer and his son. Hill became a suspect because he had received a gunshot wound on the same night of the murders. Hill professed his innocence and stated that the wound was inflicted during a dispute with a woman. However, he refused to give an alibi, claiming that he did not want to sully the woman’s reputation. During the trial, the prosecution repeatedly pointed to Hill’s affiliation with the IWW. Hill had no legal help, and although no motive was discovered, and neither the gun nor bullet that killed the grocer and his son was found or linked to Hill, he was still found guilty and sentenced to death. Hill was more than willing to take on the role of martyr, claiming in a letter to Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, “We (the IWW) cannot afford to drain the resources of the whole organization and weaken its fighting strength just on account of one individual.”³⁶⁵ Hill, like the Haymarket anarchists, actively constructed his own manhood as one of self-sacrifice and martyrdom. Regardless, the IWW

³⁶⁴ Joe Hill, “The Tramp,” *The Little Red Songbook*, 19th ed. (Chicago: The IWW Publishing Bureau, 1923), 12-13.

³⁶⁵ Dubofsky, 307-313.

established a defense fund for Hill despite his pleas, hoping to show solidarity and the group's obligation to protect their own.³⁶⁶ Hill's legal appeal failed, and before his execution by a Utah firing squad on November 19, 1915, Hill used his last will to attack industrial capitalism, proclaiming, "My will is easy to decide, For there is nothing to divide. My kin don't need to fuss and moan—'Moss does not cling to a rolling stone.'"³⁶⁷ After he embraced the role as a martyr, radical publications praised his manhood. The IWW newspaper *Solidarity* published a headline that read, "All the world must say: Here is A Man."³⁶⁸ He was given a martyr's funeral procession and a symbolic burial place, Waldheim Cemetery, the same place that the Haymarket anarchists were laid to rest. Hill's death and his construction of himself as a manly, self-sacrificing martyr helped to further spread the IWW's message of brotherhood and solidarity, and the songs he had written left a lasting legacy that established model expectations of Wobbly manhood.

While the IWW halls and the national prominence of the Hill trial served their purpose of educating migrant workers and bringing the national spotlight on the IWW, the most substantial way for the IWW to expand its presence in the public consciousness was through its policy of direct action, especially the general strike. Hill's songs, as well as other organization materials like the Manifesto and Preamble, had established the key ideological reasons for why the general strike was so important. Striking served a dual purpose for the IWW, as it not only was the foundation for their syndicalist beliefs, but it also brought attention, notoriety, and increased membership for the "One Big Union." The ideological origins of the IWW were not entirely indigenous, or based on economic and political conditions within America. The influence of European syndicalism, including the more revolutionary anarcho-syndicalism, which is defined

³⁶⁶ Rebecca N. Hill, *Men, Mobs, and Law: Anti-Lynching and Labor Defense in U.S. Radical History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 142-143.

³⁶⁷ Joe Hill, "Joe Hill's Last Will" *The Little Red Song Book*, 19th ed. (Chicago: IWW Publishing Bureau, 1923), 31.

³⁶⁸ *Solidarity*, October 9, 1915.

as the overthrowing of the capitalist state, was prominent within IWW ideology and tactics. The strike, as displayed in the IWW's preamble, was their most prominent weapon, and it also allowed the organization to grow. The most infamous strikes—the textile mill strike in Lawrence, MA, and the silkworkers' strike in Paterson, NJ—offered valuable opportunities for the leaders of the IWW, such as Bill Haywood, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, and Joseph Ettor, to recruit new members. For example, before the Lawrence textile strikes, there were a mere 300 IWW members of roughly thirty-five thousand workers in the mills. However, after the success of the strike, the IWW claimed 16,000 members among the textile workers.³⁶⁹ One of the main reasons that the IWW was so successful in the Lawrence strike was how the union was able to gain public sympathy by showing the plight of working-class families. The IWW made arrangements for the children of strikers to be taken in by foster parents in the city, who were able to see the undernourishment of the children first-hand. By showing the degradation of working-class families, IWW leaders constructed a sympathetic image of striking workers who were unable to fulfill their parental role of manly breadwinners because capitalists neglected to provide for the lower classes. The very act of striking represented a call to men to assert their manhood so their traditional role of breadwinner would no longer be imperiled by industrial capitalism. During the strikes, IWW members created songs and poems that alluded to their own strong masculinity as they worked in unison and in solidarity with one another. Mr. Block, a cartoon character, became an especially popular publication when it appeared after the Paterson strike. Ernest Riebe, the cartoonist, clearly depicted Mr. Block as an unmanly dupe of the capitalist boss. In one particular cartoon, Mr. Block is hired as a strikebreaker. Failing to break the solidarity of the workers, Mr. Block's manhood is belittled by Wobblies who state, "Don't call him a man. He's one of them American federation scabs."³⁷⁰

³⁶⁹ Dubofsky, 234, 255.

³⁷⁰ Ernest Riebe, "He Tries to Be a Union Scab," *Industrial Worker*, March 6, 1913.

Since the IWW relied on the general strike as a means of expanding their membership base, as well as furthering their political and economic goals, strikes became a literal battleground between capitalists and their radical opposition. In July 1912, three union members of the Brotherhood of Timber Workers, a union allied with the IWW, were killed in Grabow, Louisiana, after a gunfight ensued between strikers and armed strikebreakers. A year later in August 1913 in Wheatland, California, another battle broke out between striking hop pickers and policemen who had attempted to arrest the leader of the strike, Richard Ford. In the aftermath, four lay dead, including a District Attorney, Edward T. Manwell, and a deputy sheriff, Eugene Reardon.³⁷¹

The correlation between labor strikes and violence was not original in regards to the IWW in the Progressive Era. Violence did occur during the strikes of the Gilded Age—over one hundred people lost their lives during the 1877 railroad strikes, for example, and seven workers were killed during the Homestead strike in 1892. However, labor unions of the Gilded Age had generally sought to promote respectability among its membership by avoiding calling for violence. The Knights of Labor, especially, condemned violence and desired that their members, if they did go on strike, attempt to restrain themselves from committing acts of violence. However, the IWW's position on violence was murkier than preceding labor unions, and the ambiguity lies within shifting gender expectations. The frequency of violent affairs in relation to strikes in the Progressive Era can partly be attributed to evolving, and often contradictory, constructions of masculinity. The IWW had come of age in an era in which aggressive, red-blooded manliness was praised in all aspects of society. IWW members often proved their masculinity by pointing to their fighting spirit. For example, when IWW leader William Haywood was on trial for the assassination of Idaho governor Frank Steunenberg, his attorney,

³⁷¹ Dubofsky, 216-217, 294-298.

Clarence Darrow, appealed to the jury by constructing Haywood's manhood as a man "who did not know how to make a living except by work, poor fellow. He is a plain, blunt, courageous, able fighting man. If he had anything to say, he said it. If he had anybody to fight he fought, whether it was a regiment of soldiers or not." In the same closing argument, Darrow referred to Charles Moyer, an IWW member and alleged accomplice of Haywood, as a "man of force."³⁷² Both Haywood and Moyer were acquitted, showing not only the viability of using manly appeals in court, but also how the IWW positioned themselves as physically strong and imposing men.³⁷³

While IWW members often pointed to their red-blooded masculinity, officially they rejected the use of violence as an organizational strategy. Due to the Steunenberg assassination trial, Haywood acquired a violent reputation in the collective mind of the public. Yet, Haywood and the IWW actually rejected violence. Haywood especially rejected the use of violence after the beginning of World War I, accurately fearing that the U.S. government, which was quick to prosecute radicals on the grounds of espionage and sedition, would use IWW violence as a pretext to decimate the organization. The *Industrial Union Bulletin* announced that, while violence "is the basis of every political state in existence, [it] has no place in the foundation or superstructure of this organization."³⁷⁴

Instead, the Wobblies envisioned that victory would come, not through the violent overthrow or electoral usurpation of government, but instead by direct, non-violent action. Wobblies' forms of civil disobedience included the general strike, which they hoped would bring the economy to a halt, and free speech fights. In free speech fights, Wobblies set up soapboxes on street corners and gave speeches, usually without going through the process of obtaining permits. The speeches recruited workers into the One Big Union," and condemned capitalist employers as "sharks." After the police arrested the speaker, the Wobblies encouraged members

³⁷² *Chicago Tribune*, June 25, 1907.

³⁷³ Hill, 137-138.

³⁷⁴ *Industrial Union Bulletin*, May 11, 1907; quoted in Conlin, 97.

to flood the town and practice their right to free speech. Club-wielding policemen often used force to break up a free speech rally when arresting Wobblies, yet, the IWW encouraged its members to remain non-violent. Eventually, the number of arrested Wobblies put severe strains on city finances and institutions, which would lead to the release of the Wobbly speakers. The first free speech fight occurred in 1909-1910 in Spokane, Washington, when over six hundred Wobblies were arrested for giving speeches or publishing IWW newspapers. In the end, the free speech fights proved effective. The mayor of Spokane eventually caved; he ordered the release of all the Wobblies and prohibited the arrest of Wobblies on free speech issues.³⁷⁵

Despite the organization's attempt to achieve their goals by non-violence, they still held a violent reputation in America. Historian Joseph Robert Conlin contends that this reputation was acquired because "it was foisted upon the union by its enemies: the employers it struck; the cities whose anti-street speaking ordinances it defied; AFL unionist rivals; anti-unionist politicians; and the reformist wing of the Socialist Party." An article "How the West Dealt With One Labor Union," which appeared in *Harper's Weekly*, exemplifies how this negative reputation was constructed. The author of the piece, Barton W. Currie, describes the IWW as "bad men and avowed anarchists." This description is similar to constructions of the Haymarket anarchists in the 1880s as cowards who were proficient in the art of skulking violence, or a man who "stalks his victim in the black-night shadows." Currie differentiates between Wobblies and workers, claiming that IWW members were not even workers, and they "bullied and threatened" workmen to join their organization; those who did not join would be murdered.³⁷⁶ Currie's article often exaggerated the violence committed by Wobblies, but the public bought it. In his manuscript, Conlin argues that IWW members were "whipping boys" for capitalists, the press, and other mainstream institutions. However, this simplistic accusation overlooks any agency that the IWW

³⁷⁵ Dubofsky, 173-182; Bird, 7-8, 100-102.

³⁷⁶ Barton W. Currie, "How the West Dealt With One Labor Union," *Harper's Weekly* (June 22, 1907): 908-910.

had in creating its own violent reputation, and Conlin only briefly mentions that western IWW members on occasion spoke about committing violent acts of sabotage. The fact remains that, even if Wobbly leaders, like Haywood, denounced violence and promoted non-violent free speech fights, many of their publications, including their songs, images, and newspapers, implied that the IWW would use violence, if necessary, in order to even the economic playing field.

Given American men's emphasis on passionate manhood in the time period, Wobblies engaged contemporary masculine expectations by developing visual representations of Wobblies who possessed red-blooded manhood. The IWW primarily depicted the typical workingman as strong, shirtless, and muscular, often wielding hammers, or other work tools, which signified potential weapons. Through the presentation of the Wobbly as a muscular worker, the IWW appropriated the contemporary popularity of bodybuilders, such as Eugene Sandow, which emphasized physical strength as proof of masculinity. The IWW press also employed frequent allusions to slavery of the working class, but balanced the emasculating implications of slavery with the empowering images of slave insurrections. One particular image in the *Defense News Bulletin* displays a muscular worker held in chains with the accompanying caption, "Is Freedom Dead?" Furthermore, the IWW employed frequent allusions to the lyric from the song *The Internationale* that exclaimed, "Arise ye Slaves!"³⁷⁷ In using graphic images, as well as obvious references to slave rebellions, the IWW clearly intended to highlight the potential for violence, along with the manly superiority of workers that was inherently contained within their masculine bodies. Furthermore, many of the songs in *The Little Red Song Book* referred to violence, most notably the song "Christians at War." This particular song satirized "Onward Christian Soldiers" as the lyrics state, "Onward Christian Soldiers! Duty's way is plain; Slay your Christian brothers, or by them be slain."³⁷⁸ Taken in unison, the visual images in its newspapers, and the songs they

³⁷⁷ *IWW Defense News Bulletin*, March 2, 1918; *Little Red Songbook*, 3.

³⁷⁸ *Little Red Songbook* (Chicago: The IWW Publishing Bureau, 1913).

sang were highly suggestive that IWW members would respond with violent resistance if provoked.

Whereas the IWW depicted its members as strong and hardy, the typical IWW publication portrayed the capitalist as lacking manhood. Capitalists were usually visualized as obese, idle, and excessively rich men who presented themselves as respectable men who wear top hats and suits. This trope is on display in a particular cartoon titled “The Little Fellow’s Big Backing,” which features several capitalists representing various trusts, such as lumber, steel, and copper, who present a unified force, but lack any semblance of individuality or proper masculinity. In the same cartoon, there is a typical representation of the government representative: a legal prosecutor drawn as an overcivilized man; he has a frail physique and wears glasses. Other IWW cartoons often utilized similar thematic approaches, such as the cartoon, “The Straw Man,” which also displays a weak attorney being bullied by the larger and wealthier capitalist. In referencing the manly deficiencies of middle-class and upper-class men, the IWW, perhaps unintentionally, exacerbated the anxieties of non-working-class men who feared overcivilization. While the IWW certainly did not fire the first shot in most industrial battles, their position of non-violence sparked violent reprisals against them, committed by men anxious to prove their manhood in an era of heightened, and accepted, notions of red-blooded masculinity.³⁷⁹

It bears mentioning that IWW publications did not always equate strength and brute force with idealized manhood. In fact, IWW cartoonists often lampooned the degenerate capitalist as a hypermasculine, primitive caveman with a furrowed brow, though still wearing respectable attire. For the IWW, disparate, and somewhat contradictory, constructions of the masculinity of capitalists were employed regularly, but the capitalist was always placed at opposite ends of a

³⁷⁹ *IWW Defense News Bulletin*, April 27, 1918; *IWW Defense News Bulletin*, June 1, 1918.

masculine spectrum; either he was fat, happy, and overcivilized, or he possessed masculine degeneracy to excess. Wobblies also resorted to depicting capitalists as “greedy parasites” as evidence in Ralph Chaplin’s song, “Solidarity Forever,” to denigrate their capitalist opposition as feeding off of the labor and manhood of the working-class. Meanwhile, the IWW member and worker usually occupied a normalized middle ground as a physically strong worker, but also as a man who loved humanity and longed for brotherhood.

To add to the complexity and contradictory nature of their visual representations, IWW publications often waffled between using zoomorphic images as symbolizing either positive or negative values of masculinity. In one such cartoon, the IWW is depicted as a fierce tiger, believed to be merely a housecat by the capitalist owner. While the depiction of a fierce tiger presents the Wobblies as possessing virile aggression, one of the Wobblies’ primary mascots was the “sab cat.” The “sab cat” was not a threatening cat, but usually a thin black or tabby cat that encouraged sabotage. Ralph Chaplin’s “Harvest Song” assures that the Wobblies will turn “the sab cat loose or get our share,” not through violence, but through cunning sabotage. The “sab cat” provides another way to view the Wobblies in that they did not necessarily violence, but were prepared to obtain what was rightfully theirs.³⁸⁰ On the contrary, the IWW frequently referred to capitalists as predatory beasts, especially by calling them “sharks.” Reference to aggressive and fierce beasts were implemented in a contradictory manner by showing that strength could an indicator of masculinity, but overtly aggressive behavior was demonized. The visual indicators of masculine identity were obvious and thus easily recognizable by the middle and upper classes. Since the IWW emphasized their superior masculinity in contrast to the overcivilized or degenerate capitalist, the organization’s methods intensified the violence between the IWW and capitalists. Considering the emphasis placed on passionate manhood by

³⁸⁰ Salerno, 113-116.

American men in the Progressive Era, any insinuation that a man lacked manhood could potentially lead to violence between men who wanted to prove their manhood with a public response.

Violent acts between the IWW and its opposition especially escalated after the start of World War I. As jingoistic Americans embraced a policy of 100% Americanism, they also showed their hatred and distrust for labor unions, especially the IWW, which was viewed as foreign and unpatriotic. Under the impression that striking workers limited the productivity and chances for military success, IWW halls were raided throughout the country. These raids sometimes resulted in violent conflict, such as in Everett, Washington and Centralia, Washington. With hostility intensifying between the IWW and its capitalist opposition, the IWW began to refashion its historical origins by highlighting the organization's connections to American frontier mythology and manliness. The IWW also began to give great effort to recruit the "timber beasts," or the lumber workers in the Pacific Northwest and portray them as symbols of rugged and manly American workers.

Ralph Chaplin's history of the Centralia Massacre, titled *The Centralia Conspiracy*, epitomizes how the IWW created a frontier myth for the organization. He began by claiming that the land itself was a site of manliness as "wood is one of the most primitive and indispensable of human necessities. Without its use we would still be groping in the gloom and misery of early savagery." The pioneering men who tamed these forests, according to Chaplin, were "forced to bare their arms and match their strength with the wooded wilderness . . . Manfully did these men labor until their work was done." Images included in the pamphlet show men engaging in a dangerous line of work, such as cutting off the tops of trees over a hundred feet high. Similarly, other I.W.W publications commonly depicted the injuries sustained by workers in the lumber industry. Walker Smith's history of the Everett Massacre included

photographs of shingle-weavers who had lost several fingers to sharp blades. As these workers risked bodily harm and used their manly strength to conquer nature, Chaplin contrasted their authentic manhood with that of the unmanly “social parasite” or monopolist that came “creeping like a black curse upon the land. Stealing, coercing, cajoling, defrauding, it spread from the plague-center in Wall St., leaving misery, class antagonism and resentment in its trail.”³⁸¹

These publications did not include such depictions of degraded workers merely to elicit sympathy for their profession and their lack of powerlessness. Instead, by establishing their occupations within America’s historical fascination of frontier ruggedness, the IWW sought to appropriate masculine supremacy by staking claim as the true heirs of manly frontiersmen. Thus, as Chaplin relates, the place where “the spirit of real Americanism was born” had been stolen by modern industrial capitalism. It now became the duty of the IWW to organize the “timber beasts” which was “a man’s sized job, and his efforts to organize and better the working conditions in the lumber industry have been manly efforts—and bitterly opposed.” Chaplin concludes his discussion of the manliness of the lumber workers by claiming that these are the manliest of men, who possess “the dignity and independence of the savage . . . [and are] too stubborn ever to repudiate [their] red-blooded manhood at the behest of [their] masters and become a serf.” Through the creation of a frontier origin story, the IWW was essentially emphasizing its red-blooded, rugged masculinity by appropriating contemporary and conventional beliefs about the significance of the frontier in American history for themselves. Furthermore, Chaplin hinted that Wobbly men would resort to aggressive action in defense of their manly dignity and independence.³⁸²

³⁸¹ Chaplin, 4-5; Walker C. Smith, *The Everett Massacre: A History of the Class Struggle in the Lumber Industry* (Chicago: IWW Publishing Bureau, 1918).

³⁸² Chaplin, 9-10, 12; Richard Rajala, “A Dandy Bunch of Wobblies: Pacific Northwest Loggers and the Industrial Workers of the World, 1900-1930,” *Labor History* 37, Issue 2 (Spring 1996), 205-234.

With both radicals and capitalists staking claims to authentic American manhood, intense vigilantism spread throughout western towns. In 1916, Everett, Washington, a town built and sustained by lumber production, was the site of a brutal pitched battle between IWW members and Everett police. In writing the history of the strike, Walker C. Smith, a Wobbly, addressed the frontier masculinity of the lumber workers, referring to them as heroes who performed “unassuming acts of bravery” in taming the wilderness.³⁸³ Smith describes the work of shingle-weavers as arduous and depicts the workers as “men who flirt with death in their daily calling.” As a result, the lumber workers look down on contempt at the capitalist “whose calling fails to bring forth physical prowess.”³⁸⁴

During 1914-1915, an economic recession drove down the wages of the shingle weavers and loggers of Everett, who were affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. In 1916, the price of shingles rose drastically, but wages remained static. When the shingle weavers went on strike, factory owners employed strikebreakers; although frequent fights broke out between the workers and the strike-breakers, these generally occurred on a small scale. The AFL did little to support the strike of the shingle weavers, which provided the IWW with an opportunity to use direct action in assisting the strikers. The first Wobblies to arrive were arrested. On October 30, 1916, forty additional Wobblies traveled by boat to the city to initiate a free-speech campaign. Upon their arrival, Sheriff Donald McRae, and several hundred deputized volunteers ambushed them on the docks, then clubbed and arrested them. Smith’s retelling of the event—the official IWW version—claimed that the deputies were drunk men who were in a “mad frenzy” and “lusting for blood.”³⁸⁵ Later in the evening, vigilantes escorted the IWW prisoners out of jail to Beverly Park, where they stripped the men, and forced them to run a gauntlet,

³⁸³ Walker C. Smith, *The Everett Massacre: A History of the Class Struggle in the Lumber Industry* (Chicago: IWW Publishing Bureau, 1918), 10.

³⁸⁴ Smith, 28.

³⁸⁵ Smith, 72.

beating them with clubs, guns, whips, and “aimed kicks at the privates of the men.”³⁸⁶ This scene of brutality establishes the escalation of violence between the Wobblies and their opposition, and Smith unsurprisingly relates the conflict from the IWW perspective by casting the Wobblies as heroic victims of drunken and bestial agents of “law and order.” Suggestive and exaggerated diction was also utilized as the IWW referred to the event as the “Everett Massacre,” despite the fact that no IWW prisoners were killed that night.

In response, the IWW headquarters in Seattle planned to send thousands of members into the city to protest for free speech, which led to a bloody outcome. Nearly a week after the “massacre,” 250 Wobblies departed for Everett aboard the ship *Verona*. Smith described the passengers, “Loyal soldiers were these in the great class war, enlightened workers who were willing to give their all in the battle for bread, happiness, and liberty.”³⁸⁷ While Smith’s manly soldiers arrived in Everett singing a song of solidarity, authorities were alerted to their arrival, and began to assemble once again on the docks. With sufficient ammunition, the “cowardly deputies” as Smith depicted, waited to ambush the Wobblies. When the *Verona* arrived at the harbor, a shot—it is unknown who fired it—rang out and a bloody gunfight followed. In the end, four Wobblies lay dead on the deck of the ship with one additional man soon to die. Furthermore, over thirty Wobblies were wounded, and an unknown number fell in the water; among the deputies, one had been killed and twenty more had been wounded. The common position of the IWW, as related in Smith’s “official” history, is that the deputies were drunken, vicious cowards, and the Wobblies were brave men and soldiers. Over seventy IWW men were arrested for their part in the battle, but with little evidence, the men were acquitted.

The violent intensity that marked the conflict in Everett, Washington, failed to weaken the IWW; in fact, it actually strengthened the organization. While America struggled to maintain

³⁸⁶ Smith, 73.

³⁸⁷ Smith, 85.

neutrality in the war being waged in Europe, Wobbly membership experienced more than a twofold increase from 1916 to 1917, now counting over one hundred thousand members. In regards to the war, the IWW adamantly opposed it; however, they were reluctant to create any program that would keep its members out of military service. Virtually the only thing they did in response was write anti-war propaganda, and they expelled any member who volunteered for military service. They also connected manhood with rejecting military service as a popular Wobbly motto exclaimed “Don’t Be a Soldier! Be a Man!”³⁸⁸ Despite their anti-militarism, the IWW clung to a hypermasculine identity as the organization served as “the army of the militant working class.”³⁸⁹ They held a Marxist vision of war in that it only existed to benefit rich capitalists at the expense of the working class, who did the bulk of the fighting and dying. In opposing the war, the Wobblies made themselves a target of patriotic Americans, especially after U.S. entry into the war in April 1917. IWW members such, as Frank Little, had counseled workers to “stay at home and fight their own battles with their own enemy—the boss.”³⁹⁰ As one of the most outspoken anti-war agitators, Little, a one-eyed, part-Indian man referred to U.S. soldiers as “Uncle Sam’s scabs in uniform.”³⁹¹ Vigilantes eventually lynched the agitator in Butte, Montana, after Little had given speeches protesting the deportation of twelve hundred miners and IWW members on strike in Bisbee, Arizona. The state-sponsored deportation further spurred Wobblies to view it through a gendered lens in that “the cherished traditions of ‘American Manhood’ and Anglo-Saxon fair play have been shattered to bits.”³⁹² The Bisbee deportation and subsequent Little lynching were but a mere preface to the escalation of violence that occurred during World War I.

³⁸⁸ William D. Haywood, *Big Bill Haywood’s Book* (New York: International Publishers, 1929), 294.

³⁸⁹ Shor, 73; *Solidarity*, May 26, 1917.

³⁹⁰ Dubofsky, 354.

³⁹¹ *The New York Times*, August 2, 1917.

³⁹² Shor, 74; *Solidarity*, June 23, 1917.

Shortly after the Little lynching, Wobblies throughout the country were under attack from the federal government. In September 1917, federal agents arrested 166 IWW members on the charges of conspiracy and breaking the Espionage and Sedition Acts during wartime because they had promoted striking during the war and had advised Americans to avoid the draft. Six months later, dozens of men received jail sentences, ranging up to twenty years in prison. These trials merely served as a precursor the forthcoming “Red Scare” in 1919-1920. After the attempted assassination of Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer in June, 1920, the federal government raided IWW halls throughout the country, arresting IWW members; at least nine indicted Wobblies, including William Haywood, fled the country, choosing exile in Bolshevik Russia over the possibility of a prison sentence. As a result of Haywood’s flight, Wobblies began to express disenchantment in seeing that Haywood chose exile over martyrdom. Mary Gallagher lamented that “you can’t trust your leaders, you can only trust the rank and file.” With the intent to decimate the organizational structure of the IWW, the forces of law and order severely weakened the group.³⁹³

IWW members additionally were the target of extralegal actions, as vigilantes raided dozens of IWW union halls throughout the country. Centralia, Washington, a logging town in the Pacific Northwest, was the site of two union raids in consecutive years. The first occurred in 1918, and the second was notable for the gunfight that was sparked by the raid that concluded with the symbolic act of the castration and lynching of Wesley Everest. Ralph Chaplin’s history of the raids argues that the 1918 raid was sparked by local newspapers, the “Hub” and the *Chronicle*, that encouraged “drastic and violent” measures be taken by vigilantes to break an on-going strike. Chaplin describes the initial raiders as lacking manhood, referring to them

³⁹³ Dubofsky, 406-409, 459-461. Dubofsky contends that the weakening of the IWW as a result of Haywood’s self-imposed exile has been exaggerated. He argues that the split between Haywood and the group had virtually occurred already, due to Haywood’s growing alcoholism and removal from the IWW executive board.

sarcastically as “stay-at-home heroes” with “war-like proclivities.”³⁹⁴ Thus, in 1918, during a Red Cross blood drive and parade, the tail end of the parade broke off from the march, and entered the union hall. Facing no resistance, the rioters destroyed furniture, burned IWW records and literature, looted equipment, and beat, arrested, and deported the Wobblies inside.

In the following year, the citizens of Centralia again planned to raid the IWW hall, which had moved to a new location; however, this time the vigilantes faced resistance. When American Legionnaires stormed the hall during an Armistice Day parade in 1919, Wobblies, positioned on rooftops and inside the hall fired upon the approaching raiders. According to Chaplin, it was “the first time the union men had attempted to defend themselves” and their union hall, despite the fact that over one hundred raids had been committed against IWW facilities. After the men veered off from the parade and stormed inside the IWW hall, the IWW men began to fire their rifles. Warren Grimm, a lawyer, and Arthur McElfresh, a druggist and Legionnaire, were mortally wounded by the gunshots, but the rest of the IWW men inside were overpowered and disarmed, except for Wesley Everest. Everest continued to fire his weapon as he ran out of the back of the hall, causing many Legionnaires to give chase. While fleeing from his pursuers, Everest continued to fire upon them, eventually killing two more men before finally being captured and arrested by the crowd. Later that evening, Centralia citizens entered the city jail to exact mob justice on Everest. After vigilantes removed Everest from prison, IWW publications reported, “He was unsexed by a human fiend . . . who used a razor,” as they drove him to be lynched.³⁹⁵ While no coroner reports corroborate Everest’s castration, the murder of Everest can be interpreted as a group of vigilantes eager to prove their manhood through the act of literally stripping a radical of his anatomical manhood. Radical literature, such as a poem in the *New York Call*, memorialized Everest as a manly martyr, who “torn and defiant” went to his

³⁹⁴ Chaplin, 29.

³⁹⁵ Chaplin, 32.

death bravely. Radicals depicted Everest as a Christ-like figure at the hands of “human wolves” and “black vigilants (sic) of Greed” who, as cowards, committed the deed at night so they were able to “slunk away” afterwards.³⁹⁶ While Everest’s death provided a powerful propaganda tool for the IWW, the organization generally under-emphasized the brutal and vicious acts committed by Everest, who killed at least two, and possibly three, Legionnaires. The death of Wesley Everest served as the climax of the battle in Centralia, Washington, and the manner in which he died illustrates the powerful convergence of hypermasculine aggression and radicalism that was evident in the actions of both Wobblies and vigilantes in Progressive-Era America. In the aftermath of the Centralia Massacre and the Red Scare, and with most of its leaders in prison or in exile, the IWW became a severely weakened organization. While the organization is still in existence, it never again had the strength and prominence that it held during the Progressive Era. The organization’s objective of industrial unionism, implemented by direct action and nurtured by appeals to solidarity and red-blooded manliness, failed to sustain itself. Jingoistic Americans perceived the IWW as a threat, and with both sides adhering to a firm belief in proving one’s red-blooded manliness, violent events, such as those in Centralia and Everett occurred, hastening the IWW’s demise once the strength of the federal government became involved.

When America entered the twentieth century, the notions of what defined authentic American manhood were in flux. Men from all walks of life found an attractive alternative to Victorian manhood in the form of passionate masculinity. Workers, middle-class men, athletes, capitalists, soldiers, and even adolescents believed ardently in masculine virtues of physicality, ruggedness, and a fine line between cooperation and individuality. The IWW was not just a product of its historical context, but it drew upon this context and intensified the cultural construct of passionate, red-blooded manhood. While the IWW concurrently conceived of a

³⁹⁶ Chaplin, 81.

masculinity established around the creation of “others,” they also preached an ideal manhood that was based on resistance to capitalism, which were emboldened by fraternalism and solidarity. Likewise, mainstream Americans conceived of a masculinity that praised patriotism and service to country as key identifiers of individual manliness. Although the IWW was unable to gain long-standing legitimacy, or bring about revolutionary industrial unionism, their existence reflects the pattern of radical groups that attempted to gain acceptance by employing normative masculine identities similar to that of their contemporaries.

Chapter 5 - Socialism in the Progressive Era: Virile Manhood, Reformist Zeal, and Gender Politics of World War I

During the same period in which the Industrial Workers of the World rose to prominence and then fell, socialism in America also reached its apex. Yet, for American socialists, it was a short-lived period of notoriety, as the movement swiftly receded into the shadows of American politics. Historians have attributed the demise of socialism in America to a number of causes, most of which grew from its own inadequacies. The Socialist Party failed to create a viable party due to its own sectarianism, which frequently resulted in expelling members from the party, often over petty disagreements. In addition to this, the Socialist Party never fully gained the support of unions, such as the AFL, or the more radical IWW, which had completely distanced itself from political action in favor of direct action, such as the general strike. Furthermore, socialist intellectuals in America, such as Daniel DeLeon, struggled to earn widespread support of the working-class, or even to influence workers to take political action against capitalism. Finally, the Socialist Party was not only unable to take over one of the two major parties in America, but progressive politicians, such as Theodore Roosevelt, co-opted many of its reforms. Although the First World War destabilized the movement and hastened its defeat after socialist leaders were indicted under the Sedition Act of 1917, the war cannot fully account for why socialism failed to take root in America.³⁹⁷

This chapter intends to address further the rise and fall of socialism through the lens of gender, specifically with regard to the ways in which the organization dealt with the issue of masculinity. This chapter does not intend to argue that socialism failed to grow in America solely because of gender; instead, this chapter will investigate socialists' masculine discourse

³⁹⁷ Seymour Martin Lipset and Gary Marks, *It Didn't Happen Here: Why Socialism Failed in the United States* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000), 263-266; Adolph Sturmthal and Paul Buhle, "The Role of Intellectuals," *Failure of a Dream: Essays in the History of American Socialism*, ed. John H.M. Laslett and Seymour Lipset (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

and showcase the obstacles that socialists faced in trying to legitimize their radicalism through this discourse. They faced three obstacles in their quest to legitimize socialism through the use of gender rhetoric. First, these radicals had to contend with popular perceptions of reformist politicians. The masculine political atmosphere of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had resulted in the creation of a stigma in which liberal reformers and intellectuals were belittled as effeminate men who were unfit for political office. Socialists had to change these notions by asserting that socialism was a virile and masculine movement. Second, American men traditionally valued individualism over communal solidarity and sentimentality for their fellow men. Socialists writers, especially Jack London, and politicians, like Eugene Debs, had to find a way in which a man could still be considered a man if he endeavored to help others and rely less on his own individual actions. In attempting to legitimize socialism by using masculinity discourse, socialists stayed consistent with the radical tradition of appropriating contemporary expectations of manhood. In this particular historical time and place, socialists sought to position themselves as passionate, red-blooded men, which was the dominant expectation of manhood in the early years of the Progressive Era. Yet, socialists also sought to add a new dimension to contemporary meanings of manhood. They suggested that red-blooded men could also inspire compassionate reformist zeal, a tactic that was quickly appropriated by Theodore Roosevelt and other mainstream progressive politicians. The first section of this chapter will showcase how socialists attempted to legitimize their radicalism by positioning their manhood in cultural and political discourse within contemporary expectations of masculinity.

The First World War was the third obstacle that socialists faced in legitimizing their radical agenda through masculine discourse. The Great War not only fragmented the Socialist Party, but also opened it up to public criticism as antagonists of socialism contended that opposition to war signified unmanliness. In confronting these gender challenges, socialists, in

both their cultural productions and politics, sought to remake their manhood in line with contemporary expectations of virile, or red-blooded, masculinity. As war approached, and the preparedness movement gained momentum in America, some socialists desired to reshape American attitudes towards what ideals and values constituted manliness by arguing that opposition to war was actually a sign of virile manliness. Concurrently, they faced widespread criticism from business elites, military preparedness advocates, and even other radicals. As a result of this attack on their manhood, socialist politics were delegitimized because socialists seemingly lacked the type of manhood that was necessary for public office. World War I further exacerbated the differences within the labor movement, as the socialist movement became fragmented between pro- and anti-war socialists, and in general, socialists failed to construct a unified ideal of what masculinity encompassed. The second part of this chapter will focus on the preparedness movement and World War I, and briefly touch on the Red Scare, as the dominant political parties and capitalist press constructed a unified stigma of socialist men as effete, intellectual cowards. Socialists had set out to reform society, and one pathway to accomplish this was by framing their manhood in positive terms in order to counteract the stigma of socialists as effeminate reformers. Due to the staunch opposition they faced, which intensified during World War I, socialists were left with a postwar legacy of appearing as unmanly traitors.

Socialists faced extensive opposition after they introduced their ideas of how to reform America, and many of these obstacles can be explained through the lens of gender. Since socialists intended to restructure society through political action, and they generally opposed the IWW's strategy of direct action, they first faced the obstacle of how to win elections. The politics of the era—as discussed in Chapter 3—was an exercise in masculine competition. To prove their manhood, politicians hearkened back to their Civil War service, when applicable, and combined that with the establishment of a manly persona that was in tune with the masculine

expectations of the period. Victorian expectations of manhood stipulated that men, by nature, were independent, bold, and loyal, and that they had the capacity for self-control. Conversely, sensitivity, compassion for others, and reformist passion were viewed as feminine traits. Politicians ridiculed liberal reformers of the 1880s, such as the Mugwumps, who tried to push through civil service reform to eliminate the corruption and ineffectiveness of the spoils system. These reformers were deemed “Miss-Nancys,” and “mollycoddles.” Furthermore, politicians were expected to participate within the two-party structure and to be loyal to their party. Hence, Republicans resorted to “waving the bloody shirt,” which not only reminded voters of southern Democrats’ disloyalty, but also allowed politicians to identify themselves as manly ex-soldiers. Those politicians who struck out on their own, or joined third-party independent movements, earned derision as the “third sex . . . effeminate without being masculine or feminine,” as Kansas Republican Senator John J. Ingalls famously asserted.³⁹⁸ The Populist Party attempted to circumvent the stigmatization of being identified as the party of unmanly reformers by repeatedly referencing their strenuous farming occupations as evidence of their manliness. Populists also attacked their opponents’ manhood by co-opting the masculine position of the Republican Party, which traditionally stood for the protection of the home and family. Agrarian radicals claimed that the Republican Party’s support for the excesses of capitalism had destroyed families and endangered the man’s traditional role as family patriarch and breadwinner. The Populists’ strategy encountered opposition from Republicans who portrayed the agrarian reformers as unintelligent “hayseeds” who were unfit for political office. Politicians thus had a fine line to walk, as they did not want to be seen as unintelligent, but yet, too much intellect also called into question their masculinity and fitness for public service.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁸ Kevin P. Murphy, *Political Manhood: Red Bloods, Mollycoddles, and the Politics of Progressive Era Reform* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 28, 181.

³⁹⁹ Rebecca Edwards, *Angels in the Machinery: Gender in American Party Politics from the Civil War to the Progressive Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 117-132.

This new class of intellectuals and experts surfaced during the age of industrialization. While industrial capitalism was establishing separate castes of the haves and have-nots, middle-class professionals began to assert their role and standing in America, in what Robert Wiebe described as “a search for order.”⁴⁰⁰ The social type known as the intellectual emerged amidst the professionalization in the fields of medicine, law, and education. Christopher Lasch’s seminal work, *The New Radicalism in America*, accurately details the awakening of an intellectual class who discovered both the “dispossessed,” including women, children, workers, and non-whites, as well as themselves, as constituting a “class apart.”⁴⁰¹ Many turn-of-the-century socialists started out as sociologists who had set out to catalogue the other side of humanity that existed outside of middle-class and elite backgrounds. As many of the traditional narratives presented, upon the reformers’ discovery of the “dispossessed,” reformist zeal and compassion led them towards adopting a progressive vision of bringing the dispossessed up to an equal standard. Lasch concludes, “The revolt of the intellectuals had no echoes in the rest of society,” essentially meaning that they were unable to forge a lasting alliance with the very subjects they had studied. Intellectuals, and ultimately socialists, failed in their quest for social change. Lasch contends that a major cause of their failure was that the intellectuals had “no resources of their own to throw into the struggle . . . except argument and exposition.” They certainly could not match the resources of the businesses class, which was committed to the status quo and possessed the political, military, and financial resources to respond to violence and strikes.⁴⁰²

The Socialist Party positioned itself as a reform movement, but it became a perfect target for the anti-intellectualism that permeated early twentieth century society. The common

⁴⁰⁰ Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967).

⁴⁰¹ Christopher Lasch, *The New Radicalism in America, 1889-1963: The Intellectual as a Social Type* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1965), 147.

⁴⁰² Lasch, 169.

caricature of the intellectual was a pale, wispy, inadequate man, often with a hunched back, and marked degeneracy. Randolph Bourne, a socialist intellectual and writer for *The Masses*, fit this physical description perfectly. With his frail body and hunched back, Bourne provided the public with a physical image that conflated intellectualism and socialism with masculine degeneracy. Socialists further developed a reputation for feeling effeminate compassion, and they spent their time reading books and learning lofty, utopian theories that practical politicians ridiculed, which contributed to the stigma that socialists were unmanly. Popular president Theodore Roosevelt further helped to craft a public consciousness of socialists as “impractical idealists.” The New York politician claimed that, in general, a sentimental reformer or intellectual started out as “high-spirited” and “generous,” but “has his sympathies so excited that he is very apt to become a socialist, or turn to the advocacy of any wild scheme.”⁴⁰³ In another speech, he proclaimed that the “socialist who raves against the existing order is not the man who ever lifts his hand practically to make our social life a little better.”⁴⁰⁴ According to this representation, socialists were thinkers, not doers; they were intellectuals, and not men who would roll up their sleeves and work to improve society. This general impression had a historical basis. Many Americans had been introduced to socialism through immigrants’ attempts to establish utopian communes in America—inspired by the French Socialist Charles Fourier. These communes nearly always ended in failure, lending credibility to the belief that socialism was impractical. By the time socialists were charging into politics in the Progressive Era, they were constrained by a common understanding that compassionate intellectuals and liberal reformers would turn out to be ineffective politicians who try to push their lofty theoretical agendas, as opposed to wading in the muck and mire that politics necessitated.

⁴⁰³ Theodore Roosevelt, “Fellow-Feeling as a Political Factor,” *The Strenuous Life* (New York: The Review of Reviews Company, 1904), 76. First published in *The Century* (January 1900).

⁴⁰⁴ Theodore Roosevelt “Latitude and Longitude Among Reformers,” *The Strenuous Life* (New York: The Review of Reviews Company, 1904), 76. First published in *The Century* (June 1900).

In addition to the common understanding that radical intellectuals lacked manhood, socialists had to contend with the contemporary belief that socialism, due to its European origins, constituted an unmanly type of politics. In his survey of manhood over the course of American history, Michael S. Kimmel contends that as early as the years following the American Revolution, Americans sought to construct their masculinity as a rugged foil against the dandified and aristocratic fops of Europe. Kimmel writes, “In politics and in culture, in both fiction and fact, American men faced a choice between effeminacy and manliness, between aristocracy and republicanism.”⁴⁰⁵ Whereas socialists were by no means aristocratic, socialism was viewed as a theory that emerged from feudal inequalities, and had no place in American society. In contrast, the type of manhood popularized in America was rugged, independent, and democratic, and the American frontier became the backdrop for the development of American masculinity.

By the end of the nineteenth century, Americans were concerned not only about the “closing” of the frontier, but about what it meant with regard to their fears of overcivilization. With no frontiers left in the West to be conquered, and resurgent European imperialism looming on the horizon, American men felt anxious that they were becoming too effeminate. Meanwhile, the British were constructing a powerful and hypermasculine ideal of manhood to go along with their imperialistic designs. Americans responded, especially Teddy Roosevelt and Sen. Albert Beveridge, by ushering in a period that Jackson Lears deemed “the high tide of regenerative militarism” in which American men sought restoration of their manhood through imperial conquest and the martial ideal.⁴⁰⁶ Furthermore, white American men turned to science to justify the supremacy of their Anglo-Saxon stock, and the potency of their Anglo-Saxon manhood.

⁴⁰⁵ Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 12, 15.

⁴⁰⁶ Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877-1920* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2009), 2.

Nativism resurfaced, and American politicians vilified European immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. These immigrants were more likely than native-born Americans to be exposed to or indoctrinated in radical beliefs, but they were, for the most part, not intellectuals or academics. Since overcivilized white-collar American workers were unable to depict unskilled, blue-collar immigrants as effeminate or overcivilized, they stigmatized them by placing their manhood at the other end of the spectrum. A telling example of this was published in an advice book for young men, printed in 1896, which described European immigrants as “degenerate human beings . . . who, incited by the freedom of American institutions, and without the deterrent fear of summary punishment, immediately give free reign (sic) to their atavistic imaginations . . . [to] plunge into anarchy and lawlessness.”⁴⁰⁷ The assassination of President McKinley by Leon Czolgosz, a son of Polish immigrants, confirmed American stereotypes of eastern Europeans as unrespectable savages, especially after Czolgosz bluntly stated in a post-assassination interview, “I am an anarchist. I don’t believe in marriage. I believe in free love.”⁴⁰⁸ Thus, socialism’s connection to Europe allowed it to be condemned, contradictorily, as both an ideology of sissified academics and as the philosophy of brutish and savage degenerates.

Socialists struggled to define themselves as manly, in part, because of their intellectual backgrounds, but also because their critique of capitalism could be easily rebuked, because successful businessmen were considered to be the “fittest” men in industrial America. In order to compensate for their seeming lack of manliness, socialists often tried to redefine the role of the individual in society. In the article “Socialism and Human Nature; Do They Conflict” the socialist author Murray E. King traces the evolution of manhood through four different types. King contends that the first type of man was the “warrior” who provided for his family by

⁴⁰⁷ Joseph Alfred Conwell, *Manhood’s Morning; or, “Go It While You’re Young”: A Book for Young Men Between 14 and 28 Years of Age* (Vineland, N.J.: Hominus, 1896), 148; quoted in Kimmel, 64.

⁴⁰⁸ Walter Channing, M.D., “The Mental State of Czolgosz: The Assassin of President McKinley,” *American Journal of Insanity* LIX, No. 2, (1902), 23.

hunting, but willingly gave up his individualism to join a tribe and ensure a longer life in a communal system. After social and economic advancements occurred, the warrior advanced into the next type of man, “the soldier.” According to King, the soldier’s masculinity was based on the expectations that he would commit “mass murder” and always be “disciplined and subordinate.” Ultimately, the soldier surrendered his individualism to meet the wants of his feudal master. The “capitalist type” replaced the soldier and this change embodied a significant shift in that society now valued the achievements of the individual over what was good for the public. King explains that the capitalist was noted for having character traits that consist of “craft, simulation, calculation, persistent aggressiveness . . . [and] highly developed acquisitive qualities, [including the] readiness to take advantage, coldness, indifference, and a disregard for others.” Throughout this historical period of the capitalist, King argues, “The successful man has not been the good man . . . but he has been the man whom the system has utilized most in conformity with itself.” The only way to rescue manhood from the capitalist type, King explains, was through evolution to the “social type.” In this vision, the “social route purifies and regenerates the man; tames and civilizes the wild primitive instincts, rationalizes the mind, intensifies the moral and intellectual being, develops the civic virtues of public spirit, responsibility . . . and the social elements of benevolence and love.”⁴⁰⁹ King’s conception of masculinity was academic and historically-based, and it went against the current of men’s expectations in industrial America, especially in the political sphere. His notion of the “social man” highlighted the obstacles that socialists faced in constructing their manhood in the early twentieth century, which included the tension between individualism and communalism, and the desire to reposition masculinity so that it encompassed feminine qualities of reformist zeal.

⁴⁰⁹ Murray E. King, *Socialism and Human Nature; Do They Conflict* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Company, 1905), 19, 20-21, 25.

Due to the American political culture that defined liberal reformers as unmanly and socialists as effeminate, compassionate, and European, some socialists, especially Jack London, tried to reinvent socialism as a masculine, and American, ideology. While London was never a major figure in the Socialist Party, and never served in any political office, he, along with Eugene Debs, was among the best-known socialists in the country due to the popularity of his books and short stories. London's socialism serves as an important starting point in understanding the shifting masculine expectations in the Progressive Era, for he was one of the foremost writers who established the ideal of red-blooded masculinity. The author's distinctly American roots and prominent glorification of the Anglo-Saxon race in his works, as well as the frontier settings and rugged themes in his writing, allowed him to skirt any connections with being an unmanly Europeanized socialist. Yet, in trying to construct socialism as manly, his life and writings illustrate a central paradox facing socialists: was it possible for a socialist to be a manly, rugged individual in step with the dominant expectations of manhood in America, but also have feminine compassion for the dispossessed?

London's life, in many respects, was a contradiction. He was born and raised in a broken family of working-class poverty, and despite all the wealth he earned from his publications, he struggled with debt all his life. Although he valorized physical struggle, he became a self-made man as a writer, not as an industrial laborer or a farmer. London was a rampant individualist with regard to what constituted manhood, but he also espoused socialist theories. He became one of America's most popular writers, even though the business class generally repressed radical voices in America. He became one of America's most prominent socialists, yet he never

truly supported the Socialist Party, and, ultimately, withdrew his membership near the end of his life in 1916.⁴¹⁰

London, according to his own nostalgic mythmaking, became a socialist without even knowing what socialism entailed. As he bluntly recalled, “It was hammered into me.”⁴¹¹ Yet, socialism was not hammered into him by a person or a group, but from life experience. In his essay, “How I Became A Socialist,” he wrote, “Not only was I not looking for Socialism at the time of my conversion, but I was fighting it. I was very young and callow, did not know much of anything, and though I had never even heard of a school called ‘Individualism,’ I sang the pæan of the strong with all my heart.”⁴¹² As a youth, he was a hard worker. He risked his life while stealing oysters in San Francisco Bay and getting into fights in docks and bars; he worked on ship that killed seals for their skin, and eventually at a jute mill. Of his manly youth he recalled,

And because of all this . . . I was a rampant individualist. It was very natural. I was a winner . . . To be a MAN was to write man in large capitals on my heart. To adventure like a man, and fight like a man, and do a man’s work . . . And I looked ahead into long vistas of a hazy and interminable future, into which, playing what I conceived to be a MAN’S game, I should continue to travel with unfailing health, without accidents, and with muscles ever vigorous . . . I could see myself only raging through life like one of Nietzsche’s *blond beasts*, lustfully roving and conquering by sheer superiority and strength.⁴¹³

London’s conception of manliness clearly was influenced by the dominant expectations of self-made manhood, red-blooded individualism, and even the Social Darwinist-inspired notion of “survival of the fittest.” London’s conversion from individualist to socialist occurred after he

⁴¹⁰ Earle Labor, *Jack London* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1974); Alex Kershaw, *Jack London: A Life* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997). There are several biographies of Jack London. These two works are the ones I consulted that provide the background details to his life.

⁴¹¹ Jack London, “How I Became a Socialist (1903)” *The Portable Jack London*, ed. Earle Labor (New York: Penguin Books, 1994), 458-461.

⁴¹² London, “How I Became a Socialist,” 458.

⁴¹³ London, “How I Became a Socialist,” *The Portable Jack London*, 458-459. London’s use of the phrase “blond beast” was more than likely taken from Friedrich Nietzsche who used the phrase to describe “an ancient type of warrior nobles,” or a superior master class. For more info consult Bruce Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology, and Scholarship* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 101-120.

joined a rear detachment of Coxe's Army in its march to Washington, mostly out of a desire to see the country. While in Illinois, he deserted the detachment, and continuing to tramp eastward, he was eventually arrested as a vagrant in Niagara Falls, NY. He felt that while on this "new *blond-beast* adventure I found myself looking upon life from a new and totally different angle. I had dropped down from the proletariat into what sociologists love to call the 'submerged tenth.'" Among the people he met were "all sorts of men, many of whom had once been as good as myself and just as *blond-beastly*; sailor-men, soldier-men, labor-men, all wrenched and distorted and twisted out of shape by toil and hardship and accident." Seeing these once-strong men cast aside by the cruel nature of industrial capitalism caused concern for London who explained, "A terror seized me. What when my strength failed? When I should be unable to work shoulder to shoulder with the strong men who were as yet babies unborn?" He concludes his essay with a metaphor of the Social Pit, a Social-Darwinist struggle of men clawing at one another to try and remain afloat as long as their muscles allowed them. London vowed that he would "*climb out of the Pit, but not by the muscles of my body shall I climb out. I shall do no more hard work.*" London claimed that the vision of the Social Pit inspired his conversion to socialism, and even though he was a socialist "without knowing it," he thus set out to start reading all of the books he could on the subject.⁴¹⁴

London's conversion to socialism exposes the contemporary realities that he was faced with and exemplifies how he upheld some manly expectations while attempting to reinvent others. Clearly, London was influenced by a society that valued individualism, manly achievement, and virtues of strength and competitive fitness. London believed that these values that he cherished had been indoctrinated in him by "orthodox bourgeois ethics. I read the bourgeois papers, listened to the bourgeois preachers, and shouted at the sonorous platitudes of the

⁴¹⁴ London, "How I Became a Socialist," *The Portable Jack London*, 458-461.

bourgeois politicians.” He contends that had he continued on his current path, he probably would have turned out to be a “professional strike-breaker . . . and had my head and my earning power irrevocably smashed by a club in the hands of some militant trades-unionist.”⁴¹⁵ Over the course of his literary career, London never truly abandoned these principles in his writing—his protagonists were often defined by their manly individualism. However, he broke expected normative behavior in his quest to earn a living through his writing, and to “climb out of the social pit,” not with his hands and hard labor, as would be expected of a Progressive Era worker, but through the acquisition of knowledge and a career in a brain-work profession.⁴¹⁶ Considering the contemporary perception that “brain-workers” were not masculine, London maintained that he salvaged his manly youthfulness only because he retired from the masculine domain of physical labor. In essence, London wanted to be a manly intellectual, or as one literary critic put it, he wanted to “embrace an adventurous femininity.”⁴¹⁷ This also encapsulated a process in which London attempted to imbue socialism, traditionally stigmatized as a theory of feminine compassion, with masculine pretension. In London’s recollections, he attempted to blend gender expectations between the sexes by constructing a fluid masculinity based on combining the primitive underground masculinity of the working-class with the feminine humanitarianism that socialism encompassed.

After London’s experience as a tramp, he set out to become a self-taught socialist. His first foray into radical literature came when he found a copy of Karl Marx’s *The Communist Manifesto* at the Oakland Public Library. He also returned to school, eventually earning entrance to the University of California-Berkeley. While in school he successfully insinuated himself into progressive intellectual circles, but he dropped out after just four months since he was unable to

⁴¹⁵ London, “How I Became a Socialist,” *The Portable Jack London*, 459.

⁴¹⁶ London, “How I Became a Socialist,” *The Portable Jack London*, 461.

⁴¹⁷ Scott Derrick, “Making a Heterosexual Man: Gender, Sexuality, and Narrative in the Fiction of Jack London.” *Rereading Jack London*, ed. Leonard Cassuto and Jeanne Campbell Reesman (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 113.

attend school and support his mother and step-sisters at the same time. Around the same time, he took up an interest in local politics, and having joined the Socialist-Labor Party five years earlier, he ran for Mayor of San Francisco as a 25-year-old in 1901. After he lost the election soundly, the experience represented London's last attempt at running for office, but he did not abandon his politics. Five years later, and now the established and popular author of *Call of the Wild*, London gave a series of lectures around the United States on the topic of socialism, and proved himself one of the most prominent members of the movement. This point in his career marked the time in which London was most engaged and adamant about his socialist politics, and he eventually published *The Iron Heel*, a dystopian novel about the failure of a radical uprising, that included references to the lectures he gave in 1906.⁴¹⁸

Throughout his career as a radical, London was on strained terms with the Socialist Party. Despite his devotion to the cause, he often faced criticism that he did not do enough for the socialist movement, and that he spent too much money on his own personal needs, which included the construction of the Beauty Ranch, an expensive money-draining farm and estate in California. Socialists especially criticized him during his time spent as a war reporter during the Mexican Revolution, in which he seemingly favored U.S oil interests over the Mexican proletariat. For his own part, the talented author often disagreed with Socialist Party hierarchy, and even resigned from the party just weeks before his death of a combination of kidney failure and a drug overdose.⁴¹⁹

Jack's contradictory relationship with socialism was not unexpected given his generally contradictory nature, especially in regards to how he conceptualized masculinity. Since London grew up in a working-class home, even having to go to work at an early age himself, it is clear that the type of men he associated with belonged to the set of masculine virtues that historian

⁴¹⁸ Kershaw, 41-49, 159-167.

⁴¹⁹ Kershaw, 222-229, 264-270, 295-296.

Kevin White has deemed “the primitive underground.” Biographical details of his youth, gleaned from later autobiographical works such as *Martin Eden* and *John Barleycorn*, indicate that London was exposed to the working-class world, in which he frequented taverns, drank heavily, and fought often. In fact, his reputation as a man in this community depended on how much he could drink, how well he could fight, and he reveled in the attention and admiration he received upon buying whiskey for his associates. London revealed the association of masculinity with tavern life in a passage from *John Barleycorn* when he writes, “In the saloons life was different. Men talked with great voices, laughed great laughs, and there was an atmosphere of greatness . . . Here life was always very live, and, sometimes, even lurid, when blows were struck, and blood was shed.”⁴²⁰ While it is quite possible that the author exaggerated the masculine exploits of his youth, the significance lies in the fact that London felt compelled to assert his masculinity as derived from his participation in such manly affairs. Additional works reveal that London considered himself to be “strong . . . [with] good health and hard muscles . . . bothered with neither aches nor weaknesses, never turned down by the boss because I did not look fit,” which clearly places him within the masculine construct as a prized symbol of underworld primitivism.⁴²¹

London had the fortuity of claiming this type of manhood at the same time that it was becoming more readily accepted by mainstream society. Victorian ideals of masculinity were eroding in the era of industrialization, leading prominent members of society, such as Theodore Roosevelt to plead for a more rugged masculinity, fearing effeteness and overcivilization would lead to the decline of the elite and middle class men who were filtering into professional fields of brain, and not brawn, work. Meanwhile, Herbert Spencer’s theory of Social Darwinism was popularized into the slogan of “survival of the fittest,” in which the most fit, often reduced to

⁴²⁰ Jack London, *John Barleycorn* (New York: Century Co., 1913), 42.

⁴²¹ London, “How I Became a Socialist,” *The Portable Jack London*, 458.

meaning the strongest men, would dominate the world. Spencer's beliefs, along with Friedrich Nietzsche's idea of the "superman," were, perhaps inaccurately, engrained into London's conception of the world around him. The writer-adventurer often made Nietzschean references to himself as being the "blond-beastly" superman who would rage through life, surviving as a most fit example of manhood. London's acceptance of socialism, Social Darwinism, and Nietzschean beliefs most clearly show the author's inner contradictions in what type of man he wanted to be.

The numerous works that he produced clearly show these contradictions.⁴²² "To Build a Fire" was one of Jack London's earliest successful short stories, and he ultimately published two versions of the story, and each reflect the contradictory notions of masculinity that London grappled with. Both versions follow the same basic narrative: a rugged man ventures out into freezing conditions in the Klondike, believing that his own superior manliness will guide him safely to the next camp. Though the man had been warned not to travel alone, he laughs this off claiming, "Any man who was a man could travel alone."⁴²³ The man had even scorned such "feminine contraptions" such as a nose strap that would keep him warm, believing that he did not need them. As the man continues to travel, he accidentally falls in a snow bank, and realizes he must build a fire before his feet succumb to frostbite in -60° F weather.

At this point in the story, the man struggles to build a fire and save himself, and this is when the two versions of the story began to diverge. The first version had been published for a young audience in *The Youth's Companion* in 1902, when London was just emerging as a writer and trying to earn a living solely through writing. In this version, the man reveals that he had erred in traveling alone, but ultimately he is able to build a fire and save himself. The story concludes with the man reaching camp, and "the scars on his hands he knows he will carry to the

⁴²² Kershaw, 75-79. London especially reduced his knowledge of Social Darwinism to establishing racial hierarchies with Anglo-Saxons, such as himself, at the top.

⁴²³ Jack London, "To Build a Fire (1908)" *Portable Jack London*, 143.

grave,” provides him with the lesson of the story: men cannot travel alone in this world, but must rely on the companionship of others.⁴²⁴ The socialistic message is evident in this version, but it is made murky by the fact that the man still was able to save himself through his own skills and ruggedness as an individual. The second version of the story, first published in *The Century Magazine* in 1908 reveals a much more cynical London, and a clearer socialistic message. In this version, the man builds his fire successfully, only to have it destroyed when a tree branch, weighted down by snow, collapses on the fire and snuffs it out. This time, the man struggles in vain to save himself; his hands suffering from frostbite, the man tries to capture a dog to cut open and keep himself warm. Failing to do so, the man knows and accepts his fate. Simply muttering, “You were right, old hoss; you were right,” the man refers to the old-timer who had warned him not to travel alone, and he sits down to die in the frozen wilderness.⁴²⁵

The main theme of the story, which was one of London’s most popular stories and a story that one biographer claims is “perhaps the most widely read short story in all American fiction,” clearly indicates the masculine contradictions that London was battling with. In much of his fiction, and the life he lived that inspired his work, London praised the superiority of individual men. London himself had traveled to the Klondike region during the gold rush of 1897, where he survived scurvy and the cold. These struggles gave him further awareness of the importance of individual manliness and ruggedness, yet this perspective ran contrary to London’s acceptance of socialism, in which men discarded their individualism in favor of the collective group. The manhood on display in “To Build A Fire,” especially in the 1908 version of the story, shows the faultiness and arrogance of individualism, and London concludes that manliness and socialism could co-exist.

⁴²⁴ Jack London, “To Build a Fire (1902)” *Portable Jack London*, 62.

⁴²⁵ London “To Build a Fire (1908)” *Portable Jack London*, 149.

The conclusion of this story lends itself to another question that London grappled with: could intellectual reformers possess manhood? Another short story “South of the Slot,” which was published in a collection titled *War of the Classes* in 1914, uses the common narrative tactic of a man with a dual personality. Ultimately, this story highlights the struggle of academic socialists to possess a strong and rugged masculinity through the character development of Freddie Drummond, a Sociology Professor, and his alter ego “Big” Bill Totts, a working-class hero. The plot of the short story begins with Drummond going south of “the Slot”—an iron crack in San Francisco that separates the rich and middle-class from the working-class—to conduct research. After Drummond spent time in the “great labor-ghetto,” he completed his well-received book titled “The Unskilled Laborer,” and makes plans to complete several others volumes exposing the working-class conditions “South of the Slot.”⁴²⁶

Drummond faces numerous obstacles when he attempts to infiltrate the world of the working-class, many of which focus on gender expectations. When Drummond first visits south of “the Slot,” the rugged workers viewed the academic as an effeminate outcast, “His hands were soft. His extraordinary politeness was ominous,” and he was a “freak.”⁴²⁷ However, despite his effeminate airs, Drummond was actually a gifted athlete and a large man, who possessed a strong handshake and a “voice, firm and masculine.”⁴²⁸ London reveals that Drummond’s effeminacy was a result of his years spent in academia. The sociologist had adapted to the expectations of masculinity in his social circle, and he had become “inhibited” by society. In order to fit in with the workers south of “the Slot,” Drummond takes on the persona of Big Bill Totts, described as the ultimate hypermasculine male, “who could drink and smoke, and slang and fight, and be an

⁴²⁶ Jack London, “South of the Slot,” *The Complete Short Stories of Jack London*, vol. 2 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 1580-1594. First published in *War of the Classes* (New York: Grossett, 1912).

⁴²⁷ London, “South of the Slot,” 1581.

⁴²⁸ London, “South of the Slot,” 1583.

all-around favorite. Everybody liked Bill, and more than one working girl made love to him.”⁴²⁹ Eventually, Drummond’s split personas are at odds with one another. He vows to give up the “Big” Bill personality, and to settle down and marry the Chair of the Philosophy Department’s daughter. However, as expected, Drummond “could not quite shake off the call of the underworld, the lure of the free and open, of the unhampered, irresponsible life South of the Slot.”⁴³⁰ In his last visit south of “the Slot,” a general strike has paralyzed the community, and the academic witnesses a fight between the police and his fellow workers. Struggling to restrain himself, Drummond let out “an unearthly and uncultured yell” and began to attack the police.⁴³¹ In leading the strikers to victory, Drummond succumbs to his alter ego, Totts. He becomes a hero of the working-class, and disappears from academia as he becomes a well-known leader of the labor movement.

“South of the Slot” reveals much of the struggle that London, as well as other socialists, contended with as a result of gender expectations in the Progressive Era. The story contrasts the tropes of the effeminate academic with the rugged, masculine labor leader. In this tale of split personas, not unlike other similar stories like *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, the rugged, hypermasculine man wins out over the cool and inhibited academic reformer. However, unlike Jekyll and Hyde, London actually portrays the victory of Totts over Drummond as a positive development. London’s take on masculinity was that a strong fighting spirit was essential to the revolt of the socialists, and that effeminate intellectualism would fail to inspire the workers to strike back. In showing the contrast in constructions of masculinity between intellectual socialists and workers, London understood the disparate worlds that each came from, and the gap that had to be closed if they were to ally with one another.

⁴²⁹ London, “South of the Slot,” 1584.

⁴³⁰ London, “South of the Slot,” 1588.

⁴³¹ London, “South of the Slot,” 1593.

London tried to close this gap in his novel, *The Iron Heel*, by presenting the character of Ernest Everhard as the ultimate socialist man. In memoirs about her father, Joan London claimed, “Ernest Everhard was the revolutionist Jack would have liked to be if he had not, unfortunately, also desired to be several other kinds of men.”⁴³² Although biographers of London have astutely pointed out that the main character of the novel was named after Jack’s cousin, the underlying meaning behind the name gives symbolism and character traits to the revolutionary hero. Earnest in his quest to bring about the socialist revolution, the protagonist is constantly depicted throughout the book as possessing ideal masculinity, or always “hard” and never “soft.” The narrative of *The Iron Heel* is presented as the memoirs of Everhard’s former lover, Avis, so the depiction of him as a man comes from a female perspective. Physically, Everhard was always described in masculine terms, “His cloth bulged with muscles . . . His neck was the neck of a prizefighter, thick and strong . . . He was a superman, a blond beast, such as Nietzsche has described, and in addition he was aflame with democracy.”⁴³³ Yet, Everhard was not merely a physical presence in the mold of “Big” Bill Totts, but he also had a softer, intellectual side. Avis also depicts him as an “intellectual swashbuckler . . . [with] a delicate and sensitive spirit.”⁴³⁴ Thus, the protagonist has both physical manliness but also “warm faith in the human, ardent idealism, sweetnesses of unselfishness, renunciation, and martyrdom—all the splendid, stinging things of the spirit.”⁴³⁵ In a literary analysis of *The Iron Heel*, Francis Shor contends, “[Through] Ernest’s devotion to the cause for which he gave his ‘manhood,’ London reveals part of the struggle by American socialists like Eugene Debs . . . to rescue their manhood through an American application of socialism.”⁴³⁶ Shor is correct in this assertion, but London is

⁴³² Joan London, *Jack London and His Times* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1939), 307.

⁴³³ Jack London, *The Iron Heel* (1908; repr. Book Surge Classics No. 249, 2003), 5.

⁴³⁴ London, *The Iron Heel*, 22.

⁴³⁵ London, *The Iron Heel*, 76.

⁴³⁶ Francis Shor, “Power, Gender, and Ideological Discourse in ‘The Iron Heel’” *Rereading Jack London*, ed. Leonard Cassuto and Jeanne Campbell Reesman (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 78.

aiming a bit further than just rescuing his manhood. He desires to reinvent manhood with the creation of a socialist “superman” who has both male ruggedness and female compassion. Ultimately, a restructuring of socially approved masculine traits would make socialism more acceptable in the minds of practical politicians who considered reformist zeal to have little place in the world of politics.

Originally published in 1908, *The Iron Heel* marked the period in which London was most invested in the socialist movement. He had given a lecture tour in 1906 that was heavily featured in the novel; in fact, the book often takes the form of Everhard giving didactic lectures on socialist theory, some of which were taken from London’s tour itself. The book is often dry and lacking in plot, and long socialist lectures break up any narrative flow. As a result, the book received unfavorable reviews from contemporary literary critics, just as London’s lectures had failed to inspire what he called the “silk-stockinged audience.”⁴³⁷ Moreover, the book was not received well by socialists either, especially among the emerging middle-class socialists, and only the “most dogmatically Marxist” socialists, such as Eugene Debs, applauded *The Iron Heel*.⁴³⁸

In return, the work also points to London’s growing pessimism with the socialist movement. The book’s plot concerns Everhard leading a socialist revolt against the capitalist classes. However, at the end of the book, the socialist revolution is quelled by an oligarchy called the “Iron Heel,” that leads a counter-revolution against the socialists. The “Iron Heel” enlists the assistance of the military and trade unions in order to crush Everhard’s revolutionary commune, forcing the socialists to retreat underground. Eventually, Everhard is captured and executed, and it would be generations before socialist revolutionaries overthrow the “Iron Heel.” Everhard’s failure shows London’s pessimism about the movement, as Everhard’s brilliance and

⁴³⁷ Joan London, 308.

⁴³⁸ Kershaw, 164.

exceptional manliness is unable to bring about a successful revolution. Given his cynicism about the socialist movement, and his genuinely negative feelings towards unionism that is present in the novel, it is clear that London had an undefined and often strained relationship with the Socialist Party. London proved this with his less than full commitment to the Socialist Party, and he resigned from the party by letter in 1916, just a few weeks before his death. His rationale for leaving the party, not surprisingly, reflected the hypermasculine overtones so prominent in his writing. He claimed that the Socialist Party had a “lack of fire and fight” and was focused too much on “peaceableness and compromise.”⁴³⁹ London still viewed society in terms of conflict and struggle. Also, he was clearly still influenced by his beliefs in Social Darwinism, as he closed his resignation letter by stating,

My final word is that liberty, freedom and independence are royal things that cannot be presented to nor thrust upon race or class. If races and classes cannot rise up and by their own strength of brain or brawn, wrest from the world liberty, freedom, and independence, they never in time can come to these royal possessions . . . and will be what they have always been in the past—inferior races and inferior classes.⁴⁴⁰

Despite his acknowledged difficulties with the Socialist Party, London played an important role in his advocacy for socialism in that he provided the early years of the movement with a masculine representative. London used his prominent literary reputation to break down the stigma that socialists were unmanly. After his death, the Socialist Party forgave London and eulogized him. In a 1917 article printed in the *New York Call*, a socialist newspaper, J.B. Osborne declared London to be a “Socialist of a most thorough type, which thoroughly helped to make him a great man,” while in the same edition, H.C. Tuck referred to him as “a fighter . . . He fought for his right to be heard.”⁴⁴¹

⁴³⁹ Jack London “To the Members of Local Glen Ellen, Socialist Labor Party, March 7, 1916,” *Portable Jack London*, ed. Earle Labor, 555.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid, 555.

⁴⁴¹ J.B. Osborne, “Jack London As A Socialist,” *New York Call*, January 7, 1917; H.C. Tuck, “London, the Worker and Companion,” *New York Call*, January 7, 1917.

London's attempt to energize socialism with passionate masculinity was largely a cultural reformation that was popular among other socialists at the time, especially those who contributed to the popular periodical *The Masses*. Leslie Fishbein's book, *Rebels in Bohemia*, investigates commonalities among the many socialists who wrote in *The Masses*, including Floyd Dell, Max Eastman, Randolph Bourne, and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn. She discovered that many of the radicals who congregated in Greenwich Village had grown up in poverty under fathers who failed to succeed in industrial America. She concludes, "Paternal failure led *The Masses*' radicals to an implicit critique of the American myth of success, to a reexamination of sexual stereotypes within the family, and often to socialism."⁴⁴² The vision of masculinity conceptualized by contributors to *The Masses* showed their firm belief in equality between the classes, as well as the sexes. Max Eastman announced, "There was nothing harder for a man with my mamma's-boy complex to do than stand up and be counted as a 'male suffragette.' It meant not only that I had asserted my manhood, but that I had passed beyond the need of asserting it."⁴⁴³ Between London and the radicals of *The Masses*, great effort was made towards constructing a socialist manhood that not only opposed capitalism and self-made manhood, but also one that made social reform a manly endeavor. Overall, the periodical enjoyed some success, but it was targeted mostly towards the middle-class and elites, and definitely not toward the working-class.

London and the authors of *The Masses* were more concerned with radical ideas than direct political participation, and as a result their influence would not extend into the realm of American politics or even bore into the Socialist Party. One of the major challenges that socialists faced was how to position themselves as masculine leaders, which was absolutely necessary to winning an electoral campaign in this era. They especially felt this to be true since

⁴⁴² Leslie Fishbein, *Rebels in Bohemia: The Radicals of 'The Masses', 1911-1917* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 11.

⁴⁴³ Max Eastman, *Enjoyment of Living* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948), 341, 349, 362; quoted in Fishbein, 13.

the main converts they needed to win over in order to achieve electoral success came from the working-class, whose masculinity was based on labor, productivity, and individual strength and hardiness. Daniel DeLeon, the most prominent intellectual among American socialists, came from an academic background. He was a former lecturer at Columbia College, but his status within the school diminished after he supported Henry George's single tax plan. As a result, his radical views were widely scorned by the conservative university establishment, which halted DeLeon's chances at becoming a professor. In leaving behind academia, DeLeon eventually took his radical intellectualism directly to the workers. Not wanting to be seen as a stuffy academic, he held contempt for "the Intellectual" who he described as someone who "equips himself with scraps of learning . . . and drifts into the Socialist Movement as straws drift into a vortex. He comes there to shine, generally also to gather coppers; and he flutters his loose-hanging feathers."⁴⁴⁴ In contrast, DeLeon deliberately adopted a speaking and writing style that incorporated "vulgar vernacular," or homespun slang popular among workingmen, which especially shone through in his series of editorials titled "Uncle Sam and Brother Jonathan."⁴⁴⁵ DeLeon clearly noted the disparate constructions of masculinity that workers and socialists represented, and he provides an example of the obstacles that socialists faced in trying to gain acceptance from a working-class audience.

Eugene Debs was thus the perfect socialist candidate to emerge from this historical context. He was a respected union leader among the working-class, but more importantly, widely considered to have all the qualities of manhood. Debs, whom London admired as a "great labour leader," became the embodiment of the manly socialist politician and the national

⁴⁴⁴ "The Intellectual," *Daily People*, March 19, 1905; reprinted in Daniel DeLeon, *Industrial Unionism: Selected Editorials* (New York: National Executive Committee Socialist Labor Party, 1920), 21-22.

⁴⁴⁵ L. Glen Seretan, *Daniel DeLeon: The Odyssey of an American Marxist* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979).

figurehead of the socialist movement.⁴⁴⁶ As discussed in Chapter 3, Debs's understanding of manhood was based on Victorian era expectations that a man should be not only the breadwinning patriarch, but also a reputable member of the community. Although he had supported William Jennings Bryan and populism during the Election of 1896, by the next year, Debs was a fully avowed socialist. After converting to socialism, Debs initially proposed to establish a utopian colony for workers in a western state. Although he had become a committed socialist, Debs expressed the concern that socialism was doomed to fail in America since it was a distinctly European ideology that faced "ignorant, bitter, and unreasoning prejudice" among Americans.⁴⁴⁷ As a result, he supported the notion of communal utopias because he wanted to connect his radicalism with antebellum utopian advocates, such as Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson. In general, more practiced socialists, such as Daniel DeLeon of the Socialist Labor Party, and Milwaukeean Victor Berger of the Social Democracy wing, were wary of utopian communes, but they did recognize Debs's potential. Debs tentatively allied with Berger and their initial goal was to educate working-class producers and transform them into a politically conscious electorate. They also hoped to gain the support of Samuel Gompers and the American Federation of Labor in order to bolster their ranks, which they ultimately failed to accomplish. Debs's political ascension resulted in a nomination for President in the Election of 1900—he ran as a Social Democrat—which marked the first of Debs's five attempts at the presidency. After an alliance between the Social Democrat Party and the Socialist Labor Party led to the creation of the Socialist Party in 1901, Debs had risen to a leading role in the movement.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁶ Jack London, "The Dream of Debs," *The Complete Short Stories of Jack London*, Vol. 2, ed. Earle Labor, Robert C. Leitz, III., and I. Milo Shepard (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 1261-1279.

⁴⁴⁷ Nick Salvatore, *Eugene V. Debs: Citizen and Socialist* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 186.

⁴⁴⁸ Salvatore, 164-186.

Debs ran for President four more times, in 1904, 1908, 1912, and 1920, and according to his biographer, Nick Salvatore, his “emphasis on manhood, the central theme in Debs’s personal and public life,” held a lot of appeal among the working class. Debs often equated manhood with dignity, and passionately exclaimed in a 1908 speech in Kansas, “No man can rightly claim to be man unless he is free. There is something godlike about manhood. Manhood doesn’t admit of ownership. Manhood scorns to be regarded as private property.” In another 1908 speech in Philadelphia, Debs urged the workers to “get out of the capitalist parties. You do not belong there. You are in an environment that taints you, corrupts you, reduces you. All these affiliations are calculated to strip you of your manhood.”⁴⁴⁹ Other socialists followed a similar tactic. Victor Berger, who fit the mold as drab immigrant intellectual, turned to promoting himself as both a self-made man of “pluck and perseverance” and a tireless advocate for workers’ rights. More mainstream publications, such as *Success* magazine, took note, and characterized Berger as an “expert athlete, who possesses a frame of iron . . . [he is] poorer than poverty and admitted by his bitterest enemies to be scrupulously honest, generous, kind-hearted and a fair if indomitable fighter.”⁴⁵⁰ Furthermore, DeLeon, who was the editor of the *Daily People*, the primary newspapers of the Socialist Labor Party, began to include more gender references in his writing. In a 1905 speech given to workers in Minneapolis, Minnesota, DeLeon recognized that the ballot was “weaker than a woman’s tears . . . unless it is backed by the *might* to enforce it.”⁴⁵¹ At this point in his career, references to capitalist brutality, brutishness, and barbarianism became more frequent, and though he philosophically opposed the use of violence, he recognized the need for workers to embrace martial ideals of self-defense. To justify his

⁴⁴⁹ Eugene V. Debs, “Unity and Victory,” *Marxists’ Internet Archive*, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/debs/works/1908/1908-unity.htm> [accessed February 20, 2011]. The speech was originally given before the State Convention of the American Federation of Labor in Pittsburg, Kansas on August 12, 1908; Eugene V. Debs, “The Forbidden Speech,” October 11, 1908, Eugene V. Debs Collection, Tamiment Institute, New York University; quoted in Salvatore, 228, 230.

⁴⁵⁰ “Scrapbook, 1888-1906,” Victor L. Berger Papers. Wisconsin Historical Society.

⁴⁵¹ Daniel DeLeon, *Socialist Reconstruction of Society: The Industrial Vote* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: New York Labor News, 1968), 49.

position of self-defense, DeLeon boldly stated, “The swindler is a coward. Like a coward, he will play the bully, as we see the capitalist class doing, toward the weak, the weak because disorganized, working class. Before the strong, the bully crawls.”⁴⁵² The socialists’ frequent appeals to manhood and construction of themselves as manly politicians contributed to their growing popularity and rise to prominence among the working-class. This popularity crested in the Election of 1912 when Debs received over 900,000 popular votes, which was good enough for 6% of the total vote. Although he was not close to winning the election, it would be the highest tally for a socialist candidate in American history.

With London, DeLeon, and Debs as spokesmen, American socialists achieved some success by legitimizing socialism as constituting a masculine movement, but they were not without opposition. This opposition quickly appeared within the radical movement when other American radicals claimed authentic manhood for their ideological position, while denigrating the masculinity of socialists. Big Bill Haywood of the Industrial Workers of the World was a chief antagonist. Although Debs had once been an advocated of the IWW, he subsequently detached himself from the organization because the IWW refused to engage in political action. As discussed in Chapter 4, Haywood and the IWW became popular among “rugged” western workers—especially in physical industries such as logging and mining—because the One Big Union had made it an ideological practice to glorify their manly strength and solidarity. In order to identify themselves as “true men,” Wobblies positioned their masculine potency as a foil to effeminate socialist politicians. In a 1912 article in the *International Socialist Review* Haywood ridiculed the “effete socialists” of eastern cities.⁴⁵³

More threatening than the opposition from within the radical movement were those outside of it who condemned it, and Theodore Roosevelt especially stood as a major obstacle to

⁴⁵² Seretan, 187-188; DeLeon, *Socialist Reconstruction*, 54.

⁴⁵³ William Haywood, “Socialism, the Hope of the Working Class,” *International Socialist Review* XII (Feb. 1912): 461-471; Salvatore, 253-254.

the socialists' attempt to position themselves as manly reformers. The former president announced his return to politics in the Election of 1912, and he formed his own party, the Progressive Party, after incumbent William Howard Taft secured the Republican Party nomination. Roosevelt's candidacy was inspired partly by his disdain for Taft's policies, and also by his desire to implement progressive reform. Despite his animosity towards radical groups, including the Wobblies, anarchists, and even moderate socialists, Roosevelt recognized that economic reforms must be implemented. In that respect, Roosevelt believed that "the men of his class" needed to make reforms to capitalism, to deter the growing might of socialism. Through the creation of an "interventionist and bureaucratic welfare state" along with a "reorganization of political parties," Roosevelt asserted that he could cement his class's traditional political and social standing. In taking on the role of progressive reformer, Roosevelt potentially opened himself up to claims that he had lost his masculine nerve.⁴⁵⁴ Even though politicians such as Debs, and socialists like Jack London, had attempted to eliminate the stigma of the unmanly reformer, stereotypes still existed, and politicians who clung to policies of "reformist zeal" were often still viewed as unmanly. However, the adult Roosevelt was never in serious danger of being viewed as effeminate. Historian Arnaldo Testi argues that the "Womanly values of social compassion and understanding and reform zeal . . . did not threaten his manhood because he blended them with his can-do attitude, his overwhelming activism, and his aggressive masculine style, stolen from the lower classes."⁴⁵⁵ After Roosevelt tallied nearly 4 million votes in the 1912 Election, his friend, the newspaper editor William Allen White, estimated that at least 1 million votes were "Teddy votes—votes of men who had confidence in you personally without having any particular intelligent reason why; except that you were a

⁴⁵⁴ Arnaldo Testi, "The Gender of Reform Politics: Theodore Roosevelt and the Cult of Masculinity," *Journal of American History* 81, No. 4 (March 1995), 1524.

⁴⁵⁵ Testi, 1524.

masculine sort of person with extremely masculine virtues and palpably masculine faults.”⁴⁵⁶

Despite his loss in the election, it is clear that Roosevelt’s attempt to combine manly political rhetoric with feminine reformist zeal had significantly altered the construction of what a man and a politician should be.

This point is further driven home, when one considers Debs’s other opposition in the 1912 election: Woodrow Wilson, the former President of Princeton University, who was distinctly an academic. In an earlier period, Wilson would likely have faced protracted campaign battles that challenged his masculinity. Yet, by 1912, not only was it becoming more common for politicians to express compassion and reformist zeal, voters practically expected the dominant parties to include such issues in their platform. While socialists contended with the strain of anti-intellectualism and hypermasculinity in politics in the early twentieth century, and had tried to reinvent American expectations of what manly politician should be, Roosevelt and Wilson effectively co-opted their hybrid masculinity of reformist zeal and manly progressivism. Despite this, the Socialist Party performed better in the 1912 election than any other point in their short history, and with reformist compassion now being accepted within the male-dominant political culture, they had room to maneuver and potentially grow as a party; that is, until World War I broke out in Europe.

The Great War was a highly disruptive force. It fragmented radicals, including those within the Socialist Party, politically and also in their expectations of how men should respond to the outbreak of war. According to Michael C.C. Adams, for many Americans, World War I represented a “great adventure”; the “soldier was cherished as an outstanding model of male civic virtue.” Militarists exalted war as an escape from the vice of the cities, from the selfish pursuit of wealth acquisition, and ultimately, “War had its adherents as a cleansing experience

⁴⁵⁶ Testi, 1531.

good for a nation's physical and spiritual health."⁴⁵⁷ The war won converts from the radical movement, even in Britain, where the infamous military historian Basil Liddell Hart admitted, "Before the war. . . [I] was a Socialist, a Pacifist, an anti-conscriptionist." Yet, after the war, he argued for "compulsory military service because it is the only possible life for a *man* & brings out all the finest qualities of manhood."⁴⁵⁸ Although England entered the war far sooner than the United States, politicians in America argued over the issue of preparedness as early as 1914, in the hopes that American society would brace for the inevitability of war.

The preparedness movement was based on militaristic, nationalistic, and isolationist ideals that blossomed, but were never wholly accepted, in Progressive Era America. The basic idea behind preparedness was that American armed forces needed to be trained, equipped, and ready to counter imperialistic European aggression. The competition between European and American powers in foreign policy, provoked by the desire to tap into new economic markets, served as the historical background of the movement. The most notable supporters of preparedness were career military officials, such as Major General Leonard Wood, and the elite eastern establishment of the Republican Party, which consisted of newspaper editors, academics, and businessmen. Each of these groups had their reasons why they became preparedness advocates. The military desired to strengthen a small and mostly obsolete military, journalists and college presidents argued that a "stronger citizenry" would develop through required military training, and businessmen were often swayed by what they read in newspapers and they feared the consequences of an unprepared nation. Opponents of preparedness contended that businessmen had special economic interests at stake through government contracts to build armaments, though, military historian John Patrick Finnegan discovered no such economic conspiracy of big business to support preparedness to increase profits. Meanwhile, the position

⁴⁵⁷ Michael C.C. Adams, *The Great Adventure: Male Desire and the Coming of World War I* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990), 8.

⁴⁵⁸ Adams, 91.

of those outside the movement, including farmers, political radicals, labor unions, the clergy, and the Wilson administration, ranged from quiet disapproval to outright hostility towards preparedness.⁴⁵⁹

The outbreak of World War I intensified the public debate over the preparedness movement in America, which they often discussed with regards to gender and masculinity. The focus on Americans' lack of manhood prior to World War I became a potent discursive tactic that shifted the discussion of preparedness away from the potential economic windfall that the war would provide for the business class. Cartoonists, even within the capitalist press, repeatedly depicted the captains of industry as obese and idle men living in luxury. The president of United Press, Roy Howard, attempted to convince Amos Pinchot, a Progressive who opposed preparedness, that it would be useful even "if it only served for a time to lift this nation out of the sordid pot-bellied, fat joweled state into which is getting as a result of its orgy of money-making."⁴⁶⁰ Another preparedness advocate, Henry Osborne Taylor published an article in *The Atlantic Monthly*, which bemoaned, "Above the stomach, this nation scarcely exists as a nation."⁴⁶¹ Even the most prominent labor leader of the time, American Federation of Labor President Samuel Gompers, who initially was opposed to preparedness, switched his position and noted, "Many indications mark a decline of national virility." Gompers further explained that universal military training would serve a useful role in society, given his belief that, "Life on the frontier developed physical strength and virile manhood," and the urban youth of the Progressive Era displayed "in their physical development the effect of the restricted life of the city."⁴⁶² For his support, Pres. Wilson named Gompers to a civilian position on the Council of National

⁴⁵⁹ John Patrick Finnegan, *Against the Specter of a Dragon: The Campaign for Military Preparedness, 1914-1917* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1974), 30-32.

⁴⁶⁰ Quoted in Finnegan, 107.

⁴⁶¹ Henry Osborne Taylor, "The Pathos of America," *The Atlantic Monthly* 117 (February 1916), 250-51; quoted in Finnegan, 107.

⁴⁶² Quoted in Finnegan, 107.

Defense in order to investigate the role that war mobilization would have on workers.⁴⁶³ It is clear that the advocates of the country, including Gompers, correctly assumed that they would be unable to sell the average American on preparedness if they focused solely on the economic boost the country and industrialists stood to gain. Instead, much of the rationale for preparedness centered on masculine anxieties and on the vulnerability of the nation. Preparedness advocates capitalized on these anxieties by making the argument that the war would regenerate the nation's manhood.

Theodore Roosevelt, the self-proclaimed standard bearer of masculinity in America, especially linked preparedness as a remedy for American vulnerability and degraded manhood. The fact that he was now going by the title of Colonel further shows Roosevelt's growing interest in martial preparedness. In the fall of 1914, Roosevelt wrote a series of articles for the *New York Times*, expressing his fears that European powers intended to invade the Atlantic Coast and easily crush unsuspecting, and unprepared Americans. Claiming that he personally had seen two plans for invasion—San Francisco and New York City were the intended targets—he urged Americans to prepare for a fight. “A fight was never won by parrying” he spoke to a group of Princeton students, “You’ve got to hit and not hit softly.” In addition to his advocacy for preparedness, he framed the debate within distinct expectations of rugged masculinity. He wrote,

The ideal citizen of a free State must be a first-class fighting man, who scorns to endure or to inflict wrong . . . we as a people accept as the basis of sound morality not slothful ease and soft selfishness and the loud timidity that fears every species of risk and hardship, but the virile strength of manliness which accepts as the ideal the stern, unflinching performance of duty.⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁶³ Elizabeth McKillen, “Pacifist Brawn and Silk-Stocking Militarism: Labor, Gender, and Antiwar Politics, 1914–1918,” *Peace & Change* 33, Issue 3, (June 2008), 405–406.

⁴⁶⁴ “Colonel Saw Plans to Seize New York” *New York Times*, October 31, 1914; Theodore Roosevelt, “The International Posse Comitatus: Sixth Article in His Series on What America Should Learn from the War,” *New York Times*, November 8, 1914.

The former president was concerned that the current condition of America's youth consisted of emasculated and idle city boys, and that if war came to America's shores, then the country would suffer a similar fate to that of the *Titanic*. He warned Americans that they must not depend on treaties to protect them from battle, and that they could only depend on their own "stout hearts and strong hands" to protect their country. Roosevelt's proposal for universal military service would, in his mind, regenerate the men of America, both the rich and the poor, and "increase their self-reliance [and] self-respect."⁴⁶⁵

Consequently, Roosevelt also condemned those he called the "ultra-pacifists," usually by ridiculing what he perceived was a lack of manhood on the part of the peace advocates. Repeatedly, the Colonel drew upon three derisive terms for the pacifists: cowards, weaklings, and fools. Referring to them as "the parlor or milk-and-water pacifist . . . [who] represents decadence, represents the rotting out of the virile virtues," Roosevelt characterized anti-war opposition as lacking manliness. He further claimed that opposition to war resulted from "pink-tea or sissy Bolshevism," and was most common among "people who like to think of themselves as intellectuals . . . [who] wallow in the emotional mud-bath, which consists of one part morbid self-pity and three parts envy, hatred, and malice toward others." In his preparedness articles published by the *New York Times*, he continued on this theme that the pacifists were "feeble folk" with a "shrill piping" voice" who with their "flabby pacifism . . . represents a national emasculation." In addition to a lack of physical manhood, Roosevelt concluded that pacifists also lacked mental and moral faculties. Mentally, the Colonel contended, pacifists were "well-meaning," but Roosevelt believed that pacifists were "unwise persons who seek to mislead our peoples into the belief that treaties, mere bits of paper, when unbacked by force and when there is no one responsible for their enforcement, can be of the slightest use in a serious crisis."

⁴⁶⁵ Theodore Roosevelt, "Col. Theodore Writes on What America Should Learn From the War" 1st in a series, *New York Times*, September 27, 1914; Theodore Roosevelt, "Theodore Roosevelt Writes on Helping the Cause of World Peace," *New York Times*, October 18, 1914; Roosevelt, "The International Posse Comitatus."

Morally, the anti-war men were “unfit,” and Roosevelt especially distrusted schoolteachers who refused to teach young boys about America’s military history and record in battle. From the Colonel’s perspective, preparedness was the only option for the survival of the American country, and those men who failed to uphold their duty in fighting or training the youth of the nation to prepare for battle, lacked manhood.⁴⁶⁶

The issue of preparedness served as a difficult obstacle for socialist men who were eager to change public perception that they lacked manhood, but more importantly, it also fragmented the Socialist Party. While the majority of socialists opposed preparedness, a few notable socialists, such as William English Walling broke with the party to favor military action. Sectarianism within the Socialist Party on the eve of World War I had little to do with constructions of gender; however, pro-preparedness and anti-preparedness socialists were characterized in gender terms as a result of their stance on the war. Socialists who favored preparedness often received favorable commentary from the mainstream media. In a book titled, *Awake! America: Object Lessons and Warnings*, published under the sponsorship of the American Defense Society—a pro-war organization—the author commented that the pro-war socialists “left that party because of the rank cowardice, disloyalty, and ‘peace’-shouting within it.”⁴⁶⁷ The consensus became that those who were in favor of war held manly virtues, whereas those who opposed it lacked manhood. Some pro-war liberals, such as Felix Adler, a social worker and religious man, justified their position by acknowledging that war and preparedness would forge a new type of man. Adler claimed that if men surrendered their individualist goals towards a collective national effort to wage and win the war, then they would establish the

⁴⁶⁶ “Col. Theodore Writes on What America Should Learn From the War,” *The New York Times*, September 27, 1914; Theodore Roosevelt, “The Peace of Righteousness: Fifth Article of a Series on What America Should Learn from the War,” *New York Times*, November 1, 1914; Theodore Roosevelt, *The Works of Theodore Roosevelt* Vol. 19 (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1926), 173-174; Kathleen Kennedy, *Disloyal Mothers and Scurrilous Citizens: Women and Subversion During World War I* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 7, 9.

⁴⁶⁷ William Temple Hornaday, *Awake! America: Object Lessons and Warnings* (New York: Moffat, Yard & Company, 1918), 108.

“perfect man, a fairer and more beautiful and more righteous type than any . . . that has yet existed.”⁴⁶⁸

Similarly, Jack London, who had vigorously attempted to infuse socialism with masculine overtones, had his falling out with the Socialist Party because of his stance on preparedness and World War I. He initially was opposed to the war, and at one point he wrote an anti-war poem titled “A Good Soldier,” which depicted a “good soldier” as a “blind, heartless, soulless, murderous machine. He is not a man. He is not even a brute for brutes only kill in self-defense.”⁴⁶⁹ Yet, by 1916, as London was nearing death, he not only questioned the virility of socialists, but even went so far as to support the war and Roosevelt for president, since “nobody in this fat land will vote for [him] because he exalts honour and manhood over the cowardice and peace-lovingness of worshippers of fat.”⁴⁷⁰

The media had successfully blitzed the anti-war socialists as being effeminate, so the radicals responded by framing their opposition to the war as one of manly protest against an unjust war. Responding directly to their accusers, the *New York Call*, one of the nation’s most prominent socialist newspapers, frequently tackled the issue of gender in their daily paper. In an article titled “That Man,” the author, F.H.W., wrote, “Any man who fumes and froths about ‘milk-fed peace-lovers’ and ‘a-country-without-a-backbone’ so that these young men will march to the battlefields to slaughter and be slaughtered under the cloak of ‘bravery’ . . . should be removed to the home of the feeble-minded.”⁴⁷¹ Acknowledging that they were portrayed as “milk-and-water” types of men, or “mollycoddles,” socialist writers of the *Call* launched an assault on the belief that manliness was achieved by going to war. Several years before, in 1910, George R. Kirkpatrick, who eventually ran as the Socialist Party candidate for Vice President in

⁴⁶⁸ Quoted in Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920* (New York: Free Press, 2003), 299.

⁴⁶⁹ Jack London, “A Good Soldier” *New York Call*, September 12, 1915.

⁴⁷⁰ Kershaw, 292.

⁴⁷¹ F.H.W., “That Man,” *New York Call*, October 19, 1915.

1916, authored *War What For?*, which provided a blistering assault on the manhood of pro-war capitalists. The book is littered with masculine references, and it consistently refers to pro-war advocates as cowards. In addition, Kirkpatrick abhorred “every lily-fingered snob, every socially gilt-edged coward, every intellectual prostitute, every pro-war preacher, every self-exempting political shark, and every well-fed money-glutton,” who avoided war while the workers did the fighting.⁴⁷² Kirkpatrick’s book offered one prime example of the socialists’ attempt to shape popular opinion that opposition in war did not necessarily signify a lack of manhood.

While socialists denounced pro-war capitalists as cowards who lacked manhood, on the other hand, they excoriated wealthy capitalists by claiming that their manhood had devolved to a level of hypermasculine brutishness. The radicals’ argument rested on the premise that the glorification of the soldier and war resulted in the “deification of the brute” in which “man, the erstwhile sublime figure, now descends to the depths of bestiality.”⁴⁷³ Socialists condemned preparedness advocates in this manner, and their favorite, and perhaps easiest, target was Roosevelt. Robert Minor’s cartoons often featured Roosevelt, characterizing him as a brute. In one particular cartoon, Minor dubs Roosevelt, “Jim-Jum, The Wild Man,” which depicts the former president as a caveman. Literally sitting in a cave, Jim-Jim gnaws on a human skull; he has claws for feet, and a tiny, atavistic head propped on top of a towering, physically imposing body. Within the cave, titled Plattsburg—a reference to a volunteer, non-enlistment training camp that was established in New York after the sinking of the *Lusitania*—skulls litter the floor of Jim-Jum’s abode.⁴⁷⁴ Other cartoons depict the Colonel in a similar light, including one with Roosevelt as a vicious soldier turned crybaby when he realizes there is nobody left to kill. Another cartoon “dedicated to Roosevelt” shows children crawling out of a mother’s womb,

⁴⁷² George R. Kirkpatrick, *War What For?* (published by George R. Kirkpatrick, 1910), 24.

⁴⁷³ Felix Sper, “The Deification of the Brute,” *New York Call*, August 8, 1914.

⁴⁷⁴ Robert Minor, “Jim-Jum, the Wild Man,” *New York Call*, August 29, 1915.

running down a hill into battle as they grow older only to join a pile of dead bodies and skulls at the bottom.⁴⁷⁵ The common theme that the *New York Call* invoked was that pro-war advocates represented atavistic constructions of masculinity based on brutishness and war-mongering.

As an alternative to this expectation of manhood, socialists attempted to invert the meanings of manhood by claiming that going to war, and to kill or be killed, did not constitute real manhood. Rather than resort to deifying the brute based on military glory, socialists called for men to be judged on their mental faculties, their ability as breadwinners, and their embrace of the spirit of brotherhood. Manhood, according to *Call* writer, Felix Sper, was a result of “the supreme power of the brain . . . the arts and the sciences that truly elicit the admiration of the gods.” Placing manliness within the intelligence of man, the *Call* deliberately asked readers “Are you . . . a coward—willing to answer every beck and call of the men who rule with money?” To accentuate the point, socialist writers emphasized the lack of intelligence of preparedness advocates, such as Roosevelt, claiming they had, “Two-ounce guinea-pig brain power.”⁴⁷⁶ In many respects, it is apparent that in choosing this tactic, socialists were now embracing the very form of masculinity they had once rejected, and thus departed from their earlier strategy of downplaying the intellectual aspects of their movement.

Socialists also reverted to form and issued idealized expectations of manhood that approached similar sentiments of the Populists, the Knights of Labor, and the Haymarket anarchists, but this time they made the assessment in the shadow of war. Just as earlier radicals claimed that capitalism sought to break up the home, destroy the family, and eradicate notions of selflessness and brotherhood, socialist writers returned to this oft-used discourse on manliness. Socialists informed men that their masculine role was to be the head of a household, not a

⁴⁷⁵ Robert Minor, “Boo-Hoo! Nobody to Kill!” *New York Call*, September 3, 1915; Robert Minor, “Breed, Mother, Breed!” *New York Call*, August 8, 1915.

⁴⁷⁶ Sper, “Deification,”; “The Elephant’s a Coward! Are You?,” *New York Call*, December 17, 1915; Morris Zucker, “Mollycoddles,” *New York Call*, August 3, 1915.

soldier. As one article stated, “Your first duty is to your wife and children—for whose welfare you assumed responsibility. If you are smashed into a shapeless pulp . . . [then] your children, without a father’s support and care, may run the streets—perhaps to grow up into criminals [or] drunkards.” Disturbing descriptions of warfare were often used to shape men’s attitudes on war and towards embracing pacifism, as socialists reported that in war, “Man is but an incident, cannon fodder.”⁴⁷⁷ Alternatively, the author of the article, “War and Heroism,” in the *New York Call* contended the truly masculine hero is a man who is “unselfish, ready to dedicate his own happiness, his own life for the happiness and weal of his fellow-man.”⁴⁷⁸ In response to the preparedness advocates’ claim that urban youth and men need regeneration through martial values, the socialists claimed that regeneration, if even needed, was only needed because of capitalism’s degrading effects on modern manhood. After news outlets reported that 4 out of every 5 urban men were rejected at army recruiting stations in 1916 for “physical unfitness,” preparedness advocates used this as evidence that the American man had “become flabby and fat during years of peace.” However, the *Call* contended that manhood had become degraded because, “The working class is congested in dark, dirty tenements and insanitary homes. The bodies and minds of the workers are impoverished by malnutrition. This unfits them for any kind of service.” The socialists transformed gender expectations into a discursive weapon that opposed capitalism and war. They contended that these forces had degraded the manliness of American men whose primary responsibility was the home and family.⁴⁷⁹

Socialists further developed their opposition to preparedness and war by focusing on boys and how preparedness and war would stunt their development into men. The context that placed American boys at the center of a debate on preparedness began when preparedness advocates lobbied for compulsive military training for young boys. Outspoken leaders of preparedness,

⁴⁷⁷ Edwin F. Bowers, “Reservists, Attention!” *New York Call*, August 22, 1914.

⁴⁷⁸ “War and Heroism,” *New York Call*, September 12, 1915.

⁴⁷⁹ “Louis Gardy, “Pass One; Reject Four,” *New York Call*, August 13, 1916.

such as Roosevelt, expressed the sentiment that the youth of America must be regenerated and their manhood revitalized by physical education. In 1916, New York—a state that was strongly influenced by such preparedness sentiments—passed the Welsh and Slater bills, which ordered boys aged 16-19 to perform three hours of military training per week, and for male and female students between 8 and 16 to be instructed in physical education in their schools.⁴⁸⁰ Socialists reacted swiftly in condemning military training and used meanings of manhood to criticize preparedness plans, claiming, paradoxically, that military training would actually inhibit the manly development of American boys. In articles such as “Military Training a Menace to Youth,” the *New York Call* countered compulsory military service by providing scientific evidence—supported by medical practitioners—that military training served no useful purpose in instilling manly virtues in American boys. Joseph L. Cohen wrote that military training as physical exercise “does not to any extent meet the physiological demands of the body . . . I am prepared to maintain that it makes him stiff and angular in his movements, as well as to droop and round his shoulders.” Furthermore, socialists contended that not only would military training stunt the physical development of boys, it would also inhibit their mental and moral development. Military training, they contended, held “too much routine . . . and too much repression of individual freedom.”⁴⁸¹ The concerns that military training would turn boys into disciplined, obedient, and unthinking men made a profound argument that was in keeping with Americans’ cherished notions of individuality, and strangely, not in line with socialism’s traditional opposition to individualism.

Socialists increasingly, and perhaps unfairly, began to target youth organizations, especially the Boy Scouts, as promoters of bloody militarism and degenerate manhood. Along with the *New York Call*, the socialist magazine, *The Masses*, led an attack on the Boy Scouts,

⁴⁸⁰ Hearing Before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Military Affairs United States Senate, *Universal Military Training*, 64th Cong., 2d sess., (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1917), 435-439.

⁴⁸¹ Joseph L. Cohen, “Military Training a Menace to Youth,” *New York Call*, June 4, 1916.

claiming the youth organization was created, as the headline stated, “To Perpetuate Docility, Stupidity, and Brutality.” In his condemnation of the Boy Scouts, George Kirkpatrick, the Vice President candidate under Debs in the Election of 1916, believed the Boy Scouts was the government’s “subsidized effort for creating the kill-lust in boys . . . and the brainlessly automatic obedience of soldiers.” A cartoon accompanying the article shows a young Boy Scout kissing the boots of his master as a placard behind them reads, “Boy Scouts: Duty to Obey Orders of His Superiors . . . [and] Commands of His Masters Without Questioning Authority.”⁴⁸²

The socialists’ harsh critique of the Boy Scouts was yet another attack on preparedness and militarism, even though the Boy Scouts’ actual role in those movements was limited and undefined. In the magazine *Boy’s Life*, the official periodical of the organization, such luminaries as Andrew Carnegie and David Starr Jordan wrote articles that addressed the Boy Scouts. These prominent Americans explained that scouts should “become devoted advocates of peace,” that they should “regard each other the world over as brothers,” and that the ultimate goal for a scout was to become “strong, kind, alert, vigorous, helpful men, useful to yourselves, to your neighbors, to your country and to the world.” If the Boy Scout must, by necessity, become a soldier, Jordan stated that the Scout should be “clear-eyed, wholesome and high spirited, fit to do good work.”⁴⁸³

In this context, distinct perceptions of the masculinity of pro and anti-preparedness advocates became clear and each side claimed righteous manhood over their opposition. Preparedness advocates appealed to timeworn strategies of painting their opposition as cowardly and feeble men, whereas socialists who opposed preparedness depicted their opposition as brutish, primitive, and irrational men. Not all socialists were in agreement with one another in

⁴⁸² George R. Kirkpatrick, “The Boy Scout Movement: To Perpetuate Docility, Stupidity, and Brutality,” *The Masses* (February 1911), 17.

⁴⁸³ Andrew Carnegie, “Mr. Carnegie’s Word to Boys About War,” *Boys’ Life* (November 1914), 2. David Starr Jordan, “A Challenge! Do You Want To Fight?: What a Chance the Red-Blooded Boy Has to Battle ‘For Braver Things Than War,’” *Boys’ Life* (November 1914), 3-4.

regards to preparedness and military training, as evidenced by an opinion piece by Alexander Blume in the *New York Call*. Acknowledging that socialists were opposed to both war and conscription, Blume actually proposed that the Socialist Party adopt compulsory military training within their platform. Blume's rationale for such a departure from other socialists was that military training would be a "positive boon to the undeveloped or stunted youth. Shoulders which have been bowed by miserable years of labor straighten out . . . shiftless, shuffling youths enter the army or navy, and . . . become splendid specimens of physical manhood." Blume's intriguing proposal included a doctrinal critique against capitalism, and even suggested that employers should give to laborers paid vacations in which they would engage in military training exercises. Furthermore, Blume contends that the "discipline and obedience" that military training instills would strengthen the Socialist Party and "will accomplish the desired end of securing organization." Blume uniquely argued that military training would actually serve the Socialist Party as a "fatal boomerang to those who now hope to profit most from it," but it never merited serious consideration from the bulk of the Socialist Party, which continued to oppose preparedness and the war. Blume's article, though, did effectively foreshadow the looming schism within the Socialist Party.⁴⁸⁴

The majority of socialists continued to oppose preparedness and military training, which led to some fatal conflicts when preparedness gained momentum within America. Preparedness parades, held throughout American cities starting in 1916, were the most visible means of raising awareness and patriotism. Business owners in favor of preparedness used their position to force their working-class employees to participate in the march, leading to huge numbers, including 350,000 marchers in a June 3 parade held in cities throughout the nation.⁴⁸⁵ Inevitably, the parades became targets for radical violence, most notably in San Francisco, when a bomb

⁴⁸⁴ Alexander Blume, "Compulsory Military Training," *New York Call*, November 21, 1915.

⁴⁸⁵ Finnegan, 104-105.

exploded during a parade on July 22 that claimed the lives of ten and injured dozens more. San Francisco authorities immediately turned their attention to a local anarchist, Alexander Berkman, who decades before had been convicted and imprisoned for his failed assassination attempt on Henry Clay Frick at Homestead. At the time of the explosion, Berkman was the editor of *The Blast*, an anarchist newspaper in San Francisco. In *The Blast*, Berkman displayed virulent opposition to preparedness and pacifists alike. Writing that the newspaper was not intended for “sissified mollicoddles,” Berkman informed his audience “to not confound us with the pacifists. We believe in fighting.” As for his aspirations, Berkman announced that *The Blast* would “destroy the Old and the False . . . and blast every obstacle in the way of regeneration.”⁴⁸⁶ Berkman, to the elites, represented what Roosevelt referred to as a “roughneck pacifist” meaning the man who is a “mere belated savage, who has not been educated to the virtues of national patriotism and of willingness to fight for the national flag and national ideal”—an interesting contrast to Roosevelt’s condemnation of the “the white handed or sissy type of pacifist, [who] represents . . . the rotting out of the virile virtues . . . of civilization.”⁴⁸⁷ Berkman, whose involvement in the actual parade bombing is questionable, fled California to reunite with Emma Goldman in New York City. Although he was eventually indicted in the preparedness parade bombing, he was never extradited to San Francisco to serve trial. Instead, city prosecutors were intent on dismantling local labor unions, led by Thomas Mooney and Warren K. Billings, who had recently been working to organize and unionize city streetcar workers. After a questionable and hasty trial took place, Billings was sentenced to life in prison and Mooney received the death

⁴⁸⁶ “Aspirations of the Blast,” *The Blast*, January 22, 1916; *The Blast*, June 1, 1917; “Why the Blast?” January 15, 1916.

⁴⁸⁷ Roosevelt, *The Works of Theodore Roosevelt*, vol. 19, 173-174.

penalty. After a federal commission found little evidence of Mooney's guilt, the labor leader's sentence was eventually commuted to life in prison at the behest of President Wilson.⁴⁸⁸

The San Francisco Preparedness Parade bombing represented a high point in the tension between pro and anti-preparedness advocates. America did enter the war the following Spring, and several socialists, such as John Spargo, William English Walling, and Charles Edward Russell sided with Gompers and the AFL in support of the war. Their support, shown by the propaganda they produced under the auspices of the American Alliance, a coalition of pro-war labor and Socialist leaders, hinged on the benefits that war would confer on the working-class, including "better wages, better hours, better shop conditions, better opportunities, a fuller life, [and] more leisure."⁴⁸⁹ Subsequently, the anti-war socialists who continued to speak out against the war faced a government crackdown amidst the fervent patriotic atmosphere of 100% Americanism. The Espionage Act, passed in June of 1917, and the Sedition Act, enacted in May of 1918, cast a wide net over radical opposition to the war, and allowed for the prosecution of dissenters who spoke out against the government, the draft, and the U.S. military whether in public speeches or publications sent through the mail. This legislation gave the federal government the power to suppress radical periodicals, most notably *Appeal to Reason*, and to arrest and indict socialist leaders.

The federal government conducted approximately 2,000 cases under these acts, including trials of the most prominent radicals, including Debs, Berkman, Emma Goldman, and "Big Bill" Haywood. Aspects of the trial and the media's coverage of them often were framed around gender discourse. In the separate trials of Goldman and Berkman, the media mocked Berkman for his apparent lack of manhood in comparison to Goldman, assessing, "Berkman was not so

⁴⁸⁸ Robert Minor, *The Frame-Up System*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: International Workers' Defense League, 1917) Pamphlet Collection. Wisconsin Historical Society; Richard H. Frost, *The Mooney Case* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968).

⁴⁸⁹ C. Roland Marchand, *The American Peace Movement and Social Reform, 1898-1918* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 316.

brave and defiant as his female comrade” and was controlled by her “guiding hand.”⁴⁹⁰ Berkman and Goldman, being of foreign descent, were both deported to Russia. The arrest and imprisonment of Debs cemented the collapse and fragmentation of the Socialist Party. In the months leading up to his Canton, Ohio speech on June 16, 1918, he had been engaged in public disagreements with pro-war socialists, and he refused to amend his anti-war position. In the Canton speech—the speech that eventually got him indicted under the Espionage Act—Debs once again used discourse of masculinity to justify his opposition to the capitalism, and less explicitly, the war. Announcing that he would “rather a thousand times be a free soul in jail than to be a sycophant and coward in the streets,” he praised the “moral courage” of those who had been imprisoned under the federal acts. His speech, ultimately, was a testament to imprisoned or suppressed radicals, including Tom Mooney, Kate Richards O’Hare, Scott Nearing, and Max Eastman among others, and he promised to always uphold socialist ideals, which had “enabled me . . . to multiply myself over and over again, to thrill with a fresh-born manhood.” He further exclaimed that serving the working-class “is the highest duty of my life.” Concluding to his audience of workers that he was “inviting—aye challenging you this afternoon in the name of your own manhood and womanhood to join us and do your part,” Debs embraced martyrdom, using the language and principle of manhood to legitimize and justify his opposition to war.⁴⁹¹

Debs ultimately only served just over two years of his ten-year sentence, but his arrest and indictment serves as a fitting end for the quickly deteriorating Socialist Party, which never disappeared, but also never regained the popularity it had achieved in the Progressive Era. Although Debs ran for the President as the representative of the Socialist Party from behind bars in 1920, and tallied over 900,000 votes, the war had fragmented the Socialist Party. The majority of Americans, swept up in wartime patriotic fervor, had become convinced that

⁴⁹⁰ “Emma Goldman and A. Berkman Behind the Bars,” *New York Times*, June 16, 1917; Kennedy, 45-46.

⁴⁹¹ Eugene V. Debs, “The Canton, Ohio Speech (1918),” *Marxists Internet Archive*, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/debs/works/1918/canton.htm> [accessed February 20, 2011].

socialists had shown their disloyalty to the country and their lack of manhood by opposing the war.

The two decades between the start of the century and the dismantling of the Socialist Party because of sectarianism and federal prosecution highlights a significant correlation between the use of the language of masculinity and the quest for legitimizing radical politics. Socialists, such as Jack London, Eugene Debs, the writers in the *Call* and the *Masses*, had begun the century eager to reform the world they lived in. In order to reform and reshape society to match their ideal, they first had to achieve a certain degree of legitimacy within American politics and culture. Using contemporary meanings of manhood, which currently revolved around the deification of passionate, red-blooded manhood and strenuous activity, socialists sought to combine virile masculinity with reform zeal, which was generally perceived as a feminine trait. Eventually, the socialists' plan to legitimize their reform politics through the meanings of manhood was undercut by capitalist journalists, businessmen, and political leaders, who asserted that socialists' were unmanly cowards because they opposed war. The socialists' attempt to resituate the meanings of manhood—by suggesting that opposing war was a manly alternative to nationalistic, unmanly obedience—failed, and the socialists were left with a legacy that they lacked patriotism and manhood.

Conclusion

In the wake of the first Red Scare, political radicals suffered a severe blow to their continued existence in America. While radical theories or politics never gained traction among the majority of Americans or supplanted the dominant institutions of capitalism and the two-party system, an investigation of the period in which American radicals challenged the status quo is worthwhile. Radicals offered alternative ideas about how to reform or overturn the political and economic structures in America, and it is important to reiterate that a major component of how they disseminated their ideas was the use of contemporary understandings of masculinity. It is my contention that the meanings of manhood played a significant role in the failure of radical politics in America. The radicals' attempt to legitimize their collective ideals by grounding them in contemporary expectations of manhood was not enough to break through Americans' embrace of individualism. Furthermore, the political and industrial elites' contention that radicals lacked manhood served to delegitimize their radical ideas. I will conclude by drawing several comparisons among the various groups of radicals to show the ways in which masculinity interacted with political and economic radicalism in America from 1870-1920, and how the interaction of these forces helped to result in radicalism's failure to gain widespread acceptance among Americans.

First, the meanings of manhood were both mutable and specific to the historical time and place under study. In the contest to legitimize and delegitimize radicalism by basing it on approved expectations of manhood, cultural productions shifted, changed, and manipulated the meanings of manhood. The flexibility in the meanings of manhood created contradictions in which groups of people could simultaneously appropriate and denigrate the masculinity of their opposition around a similar expectation of proper manhood. This first became evident in the

Gilded Age when the Knights of Labor, the Haymarket anarchists, and the Populists sought to establish a conservative understanding of manhood within their organizations. Whether it was the Knights of Labor, who enforced Victorian respectability amongst their members, the Haymarket anarchists, who tied their radicalism to the defense of their family from the excesses of capitalism, or the Populists who fashioned their image as democratic producer-artisans, each group tried to accommodate an understanding of manhood that American workingmen could stand behind. As radicals appropriated these common and accepted meanings of manhood, they denigrated their capitalistic and political opposition by claiming that their opposition denied American men the opportunity to fulfill their masculine roles. By connecting their radicalism to contemporary meanings of manhood, radicals hoped to legitimize their theories and establish a broader base of support.

Conversely, capitalists frequently shifted the meanings of acceptable manhood in American society in order to delegitimize radicalism. They contended that radicals were failures as men in order to disprove radicals' ideas, but the discourse they used often created contradictions regarding proper masculine behavior. Examples of this occurred throughout the Gilded Age when industrialists, such as Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller, asserted that workers and radicals failed as independent breadwinners because lower-class men had personal defects and lacked manhood. In the Haymarket affair, the capitalist press constructed an image of the anarchist contradictorily as a skulking coward and savage brute, which reveals that a variety of derogatory terms could be implemented to depict radicals as possessing masculine defects on either end of the spectrum. The terminology employed by capitalists became even more contradictory in the Progressive Era when political elites, such as Theodore Roosevelt, began to espouse a more rugged type of masculinity. Elites traditionally believed that rugged, or passionate, manhood was an inappropriate masculine ideal reserved for workingmen, but elites

co-opted rugged manhood as a symbol of their own masculine regeneration. The Populist Party and socialists represent additional examples of the contradictions in framing masculinity through cultural discourse. Democrats and Republicans disparaged Populists as unintelligent “hayseeds” who lacked the proper manhood to lead the country politically; yet, politicians also derided socialists for their intellectualism, which forced socialists to seek a more rugged, and manly, public perception.

The contradictions in masculine expectations became more evident when the dominant meanings of manhood shifted from the Self-Made Man and Victorian Gentleman to that of red-blooded manhood in the Progressive Era. By the 1890s, political and wealthy elites in America had become more concerned about overcivilization and a decline in their own manhood. These elites, such as Theodore Roosevelt, propagated new virtues of passionate manhood and masculine physicality as a source of regeneration. In their appropriation and acceptance of red-blooded manhood, they continued to belittle the brutish masculinity of their radical opposition. The Industrial Workers of the World and the Socialist Party also emphasized its members’ red-blooded manhood, while often still depicting its opposition—who, in many cases, were preparedness advocates—as savage brutes. The shifting meanings of manhood reflect a high level of flexibility in gender discourse. Both radicals and their political and economic opposition shifted, manipulated, and created contradictions in what constituted authentic manhood. This, perhaps, leads to a more defined conclusion that there is no such thing as a wholly authentic or ideal manhood in American society, but rather disparate constructions of socially-accepted expectations of masculinity that can be implemented and repositioned depending on the speaker and the historical time and place.

Even though political and industrial elites exploited these contradictions and successfully stigmatized their opponents’ manhood, radical groups seldom deviated from their established

path of using contemporary expectations of manhood as a means of legitimizing their radical theories. Rarely did radicals advocate for an alternative, or un-established, meaning of manhood that ran contrary to a socially accepted understanding of manhood. The Knights of Labor and the majority of the Haymarket anarchists tried to build support by establishing personas of respectable men who wanted to save the home and the family from the devastating effects of industrial capitalism. These groups' understanding of manhood closely reflected the dominant expectations of self-made manhood and respectable Victorian masculinity. The Populists hearkened to a traditional understanding of democratic manhood in the vein of Jefferson and Jackson, as they praised men's ability to produce as independent farmers and artisans opposite the exploitative forces of monopolies and trusts. These expectations for manhood were not challengeable, and success as a breadwinning patriarch showed that a man had fulfilled his obligations. When political and cultural elites began to co-opt the more primitive and rugged masculinity of the working-class at the turn of the century, groups such as the Industrial Workers of the World and socialists followed suit, and these radicals could now champion a masculine role that had once been rejected. Despite the fact that radicals, in general, turned to contemporary meanings of manhood to legitimize their radicalism, it should be noted that, first, this plan did not guarantee success, and second, not all radicals conformed to this attitude. In some instances—most evident among striking immigrant workers, the more violent anarchists, such as Louis Lingg, and the pro-war socialists—radicals did espouse alternative, and less socially accepted, expectations of manliness than their peers, which often centered on an advocacy of violence.

As a result, radicals suffered from a lack of unity, which further allowed elites to successfully reposition the gender identities of radicals. Within the Knights of Labor, leaders of the group, such as Terence Powderly, faced a continual struggle to frame its members as

respectable against the contemporary stigma in which workers prized a masculinity based on less respectable behaviors, such as drinking and fighting. While several of the Haymarket anarchists tied their radical reforms to the defense of the home and presented themselves as respectable patriarchs, some of the accused, most notably Louis Lingg and George Engel, displayed passionate tendencies and aggressiveness, which directly opposed August Spies's and Albert Parsons's message of respectability. The Socialist Party was especially fragmented among those, like Jack London, who stood for manly ruggedness, and the pacifists who questioned the hypermasculinity of the imperial age. Since many of these groups suffered from internal strife regarding their conceptions of masculinity, political and class elites often exploited these divisions by framing radical groups as possessing the masculinity of their minority membership, such as the passionate Lingg in the Haymarket affair.

The question remains why political radicals kept resorting to the same tactic of advocating an image of contemporary manhood as a means of legitimizing their organization when radical groups failed to gain sustainable support by using this tactic. I contend that, because many of the radicals were European immigrants, and the majority of their radical ideas, including socialism, anarchism, and communism were European in origin, radicals had to fall back on some ideals that average American men would be familiar with. Most nineteenth century men, especially those of the elite and emerging middle-class, had similar expectations about what behaviors and expectations governed a man's role and identity in society. While working-class men, especially immigrants, often had a more "primitive" manhood that entailed drinking alcohol, fighting regularly, and socializing in places of ill-repute, they would still be familiar with the masculine expectations and behaviors of the more successful businessmen of their communities. Thus, radicals constructed a two-pronged approach in regards to masculinity. They portrayed men of great wealth as men who had broken familiar, and expected, roles of

manhood. Simultaneously, radicals encouraged lower-class men to adopt contemporary male identities. Radicals rationalized that adopting contemporary meanings of manhood would allow them to gain the moral high ground, increase their own political might by expanding their base of support, and introduce foreign ideas in regards to economics, such as socialism, which would alleviate the strain and excesses of late nineteenth century industrial capitalism. Even though their plan failed, the meanings of manhood were the most stable structure that radicals had to fall back on. To propose entirely alternative expectations of manhood, which may have included racial and gender integration and equality, homosexuality, and advocacy of brutish hypermasculinity, would only have further alienated them from the majority of the population.

One consequence of the radicals' failure to gain mainstream acceptance was that manly individualism, a dominant feature in the history of American masculinity, remained largely unaffected by the surge of radicalism in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. Labor organizations and political radicals faced a major obstacle in that they needed to dislodge the streak of individualism inherent among American men in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in order to disseminate their beliefs of solidarity and unionism among the working class. The stark difference between American individualism and radical collectivism was a complication that radicals never solved. As a result, radicals often created contradictory messages that valued individual achievement along with subduing one's personal interest for the betterment of the union or party. Radicals, despite their intention to accommodate their principles to America's traditional acceptance of manly individualism, were never able to reconcile individualism with the fraternalism and solidarity their theories promoted. Radicals, such as Jack London, attempted to remake Americans' beliefs that their manhood rested in fraternal solidarity, but even he suffered from internal contradictions in that he often praised individual manliness. The IWW also tried to dislodge individualistic ideals among Americans through its advocacy of

solidarity; yet, its predominant image was of one sole, physically-imposing man wielding a worker's tools.

Lastly, despite the mutability and contradictions within the discourse of manhood, the virtues and meanings that constituted American manhood were also relatively stable. Even as the tides of masculinity began to shift at the end of the nineteenth century—almost entirely because of elite men who feared overcivilization and effeteness—ideals of the self-made man were not eliminated in the American consciousness; they merely changed shape. The passionate, red-blooded man became the contemporary model of viable masculinity as the man who was the most fit; yet, this archetype of masculinity still entailed a high level of individualism similar to that of the Self-Made Man. While Victorian respectability did begin to fade at the end of the nineteenth century, the Victorian-era belief that men should be the family breadwinner survived the women's rights movement in the Progressive Era. Finally, even though socialism and its collectivist theory failed to take hold in American politics, corporate America of the early twentieth century began to implement policies of welfare capitalism that were designed to build a worker's loyalty to the company.

Political radicals, or those socialists, anarchists, populists, and other reformers who sought to dramatically change society, were able merely to lessen the harsh edges of capitalism's impact on the average workingman. At the end of the Progressive Era, radical politics were all but dismissed in America as radical groups wilted after the government-sponsored backlash known as the Red Scare. Despite a resurgence of radicalism with the Communist Party during the Great Depression, radical theories had been exposed as irreconcilable with traditional American ideals. Similar to the radicals of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, those who practiced radical politics after World War II, or had been communists in the 1930s, were ostracized and stigmatized as possessing an aberrant manhood, or not living up to expectations to

what a manly American should be. When the foreign threat of international communism entered political discourse in the Cold War, American politicians denounced the “traitors”—or those who allowed communism to penetrate America’s interior—as unmanly. Non-radical, liberal-leaning politicians of the Democratic Party came under potent attack from Republicans during the Second Red Scare, when Joseph McCarthy and others accused Democrats of being effeminate, Ivy-league bred cowards who were “soft” on communism.⁴⁹²

The work of radicals in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era had sought to legitimize radical thought, and one of their main approaches was to use contemporary expectations of manhood to gain acceptance into the mainstream. The failure to gain legitimacy through the meanings of manhood left radicalism on the fringes of the American political scene with parties and unions that were in shambles. Political and industrial elites successfully delegitimized radicalism often by using the meanings of manhood, leaving radicals with a lasting stigma that they lacked manhood.

⁴⁹² For more information on the use of masculinity in politics during the Cold War, consult: K.A. Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

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